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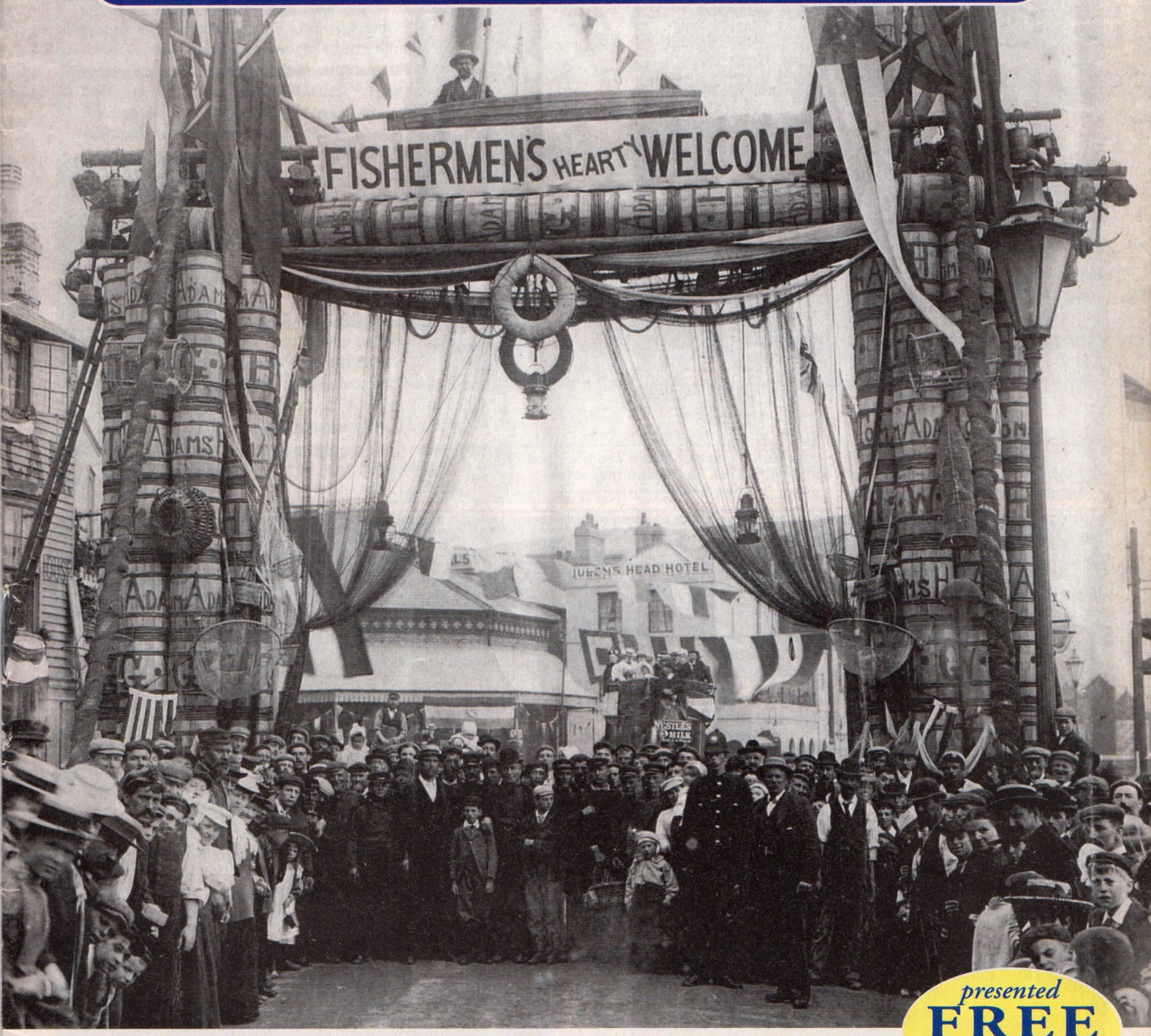
JANUARY 2000

Millennium Moments

BEXHILL-ON-SEA • RYE • BATTLE



A CENTURY OF LOCAL MEMORIES

presented **FREE** *with your local Observer*

Fair memories of Thelma's big day

You couldn't always just turn on the tap...these children are pictured drawing water from Hastings Old Town's East Well, date unknown.

A MAMMOTH fair staged on the Down during Bexhill's last summer of peace is among Thelma Hunter's Millennium Memories.

And for a good reason.

The four-day July fair in 1939 was staged by Bexhill Rotary Club to raise money for equipment for Bexhill Amateur Athletic Club's new Sports Centre in Little Common Road.

Thelma, whose sister had married the son of Observer editor Fred Wilson three years before, was chosen to illustrate posters and handbills for the event.

She still has copies of the handbills showing a couple walking hand-in-hand through the sunset to a fair.

The Observer's Town Talk column commented at the time: "The drawing of two little folks which decorated some of the bills announcing the Fair was, I learn, the work of Miss Thelma Wheatley, one of the daughters of a former president of the Rotary Club. This young lady should find it worthwhile to develop her talent as a black and white artist..."

So did the young lady develop her talent?

Thelma, now of Sea Road, says: "Sadly not. I went into the Army in the ATS during the war years and afterwards I got married.

"I have done some oil painting since, but nothing lately."

THE WAY WE WERE

1903 A disastrous gale in September blew 50 bathing machines away, flooded Hastings seafront lodging houses and Whittakers Library, destroyed the Primitive Methodist Chapel, swept away pile-driving equipment on the harbour works and forced two pleasure steamers to spend anything but a pleasurable night at sea before they could land their passengers.

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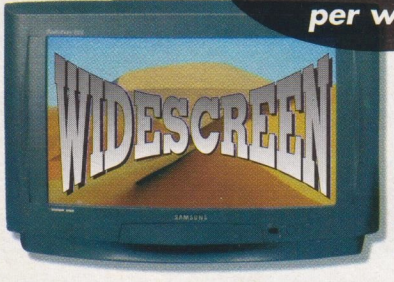

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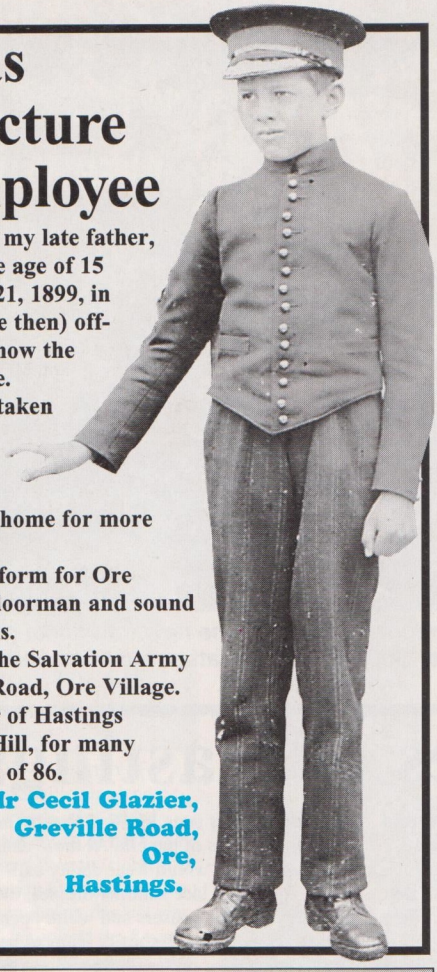
Albert was former Picture House employee



THIS is a photograph of my late father, Mr Albert Glazier, at the age of 15 years. Born on October 21, 1899, in the front bedroom at (the then) off-licence in Clifton Road, now the Clifton Court Rest Home.

The photograph was taken of Albert while he was standing on the front steps of his home in Clifton Road, his family home for more than 90 years.

He is wearing the uniform for Ore Picture House and was doorman and sound effect man for silent films.

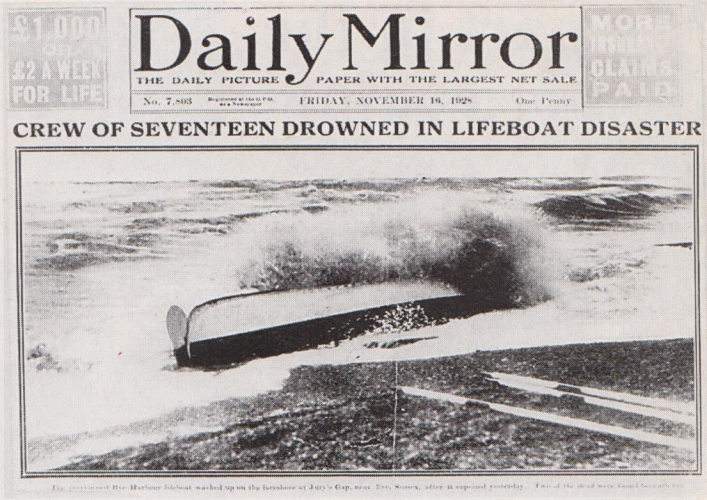
The building is now the Salvation Army Temple in Old London Road, Ore Village.

Albert was a member of Hastings Downs Golf Club, East Hill, for many years. He died at the age of 86.

Mr Cecil Glazier,
Greville Road,
Ore,
Hastings.

Many thanks to the scores of Observer readers who sent in their Millennium memories.

We apologise to those whose recollections or photographs we were unable to use.



Daily Mirror

THE DAILY PICTURE PAPER WITH THE LARGEST NET SALE

No. 7,803 FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1928 One Penny

CREW OF SEVENTEEN DROWNED IN LIFEBOAT DISASTER

TRAGEDY is often an over-used word in local newspapers, but it is the only one that can aptly describe one of the saddest local news stories of the past century – the loss of the Rye Lifeboat, the Mary Stanford, and her 17 crew in 1928.

Pictured above is the harrowing image of the stricken boat being washed ashore as reported on the front page of the Daily Mirror.

What made the incident even harder to bear was the later news that the lifeboatmen's heroics were unnecessary - the crew of the sinking vessel they had set out to rescue had already been taken off by a German ship.

Mr Robert Fry wrote to us from Pett Level with some of his Millennium memories, including the wonderful times he had as a child playing at Camber Sands.

But Mr Fry adds: "However, like so many enjoyable memories, there was also one of a more sobering nature, for across the river lay Rye Harbour, not like it is today with its yacht club and holiday atmosphere in the summer, but in those days a sombre place trying to come to terms with the loss of the Mary Stanford, the lifeboat, which had gone out on a needless mission of mercy.

A 'pulling and sailing' boat, she had capsized on the bar off the entrance to the harbour with the loss of all 17 of her crew.

This tragedy was to cast a very long shadow over that little community which took many years to fade.

It is a happier place now, but still the memory is there, and from time to time when I revisit happy old haunts, I make a little detour to that quiet little cemetery where those men lie, overlooked by the stone figure of a lifeboatmen of their time, and pay my respects once more."

THE WAY WE WERE

1904 A national newspaper went 'hunting' in Ecclesbourne Glen for several hermits said to live in caves and the woods there, who had been seen gathering limpets at low tide. Two were tracked down, one of them an educated ex-London businessman with a huge grey beard, but they declined to speak.

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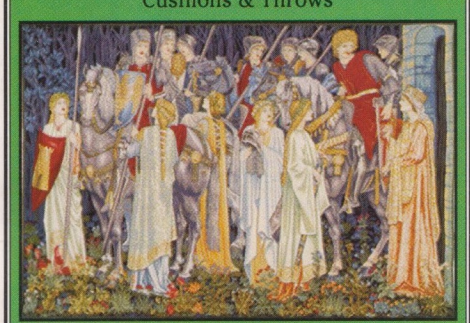

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My part in the first crowning of May Queen

A VERY happy memory for me is taking part in the very first The Crowning of the Queen of May in Hastings in 1934.

The ceremony attracted several thousand people in the Lower Warrior Square Gardens.

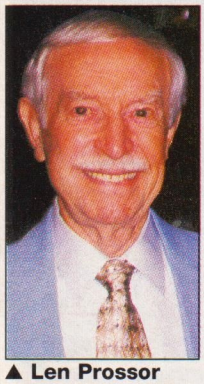
The ceremony was arranged by the late Miss Dorothy Catt and involved the pupils of The Orchard School, St Leonards, including myself.

Many local names from the past will be familiar to local folk, namely Music Director Mr H. Vincent Batts and the Mayor at the time, Councillor Henry Burden J.P.

Mrs Betty Scarbro (nee Tingle)
Sedlescombe Gardens
St Leonards

▲ *Collecting alms in return for showing the now traditional garlands at the May Queen crowning in the 1930s. This event attracted thousands to Lower Warrior Square Gardens.*

Such happy memories of Hastings



▲ Len Prossor

Len Prossor, who now lives in Maryland, USA, writes:

THE year was 1927. My family had moved from London to the salubrious South Coast, and I was 12 years old and newly-arrived at West St Leonards School.

After my tough London tutoring at the hands of a master who'd been in the trenches of World War I, co-educational West St Leonards was a breeze.

Mr Prossor adds: In my late teens I and my fellow young men had a wonderful time in meeting and spending evenings and weekends with the delightful young ladies who'd choose Hastings for their summer week's holiday.

Remembered with affection are summer evening dances on the lawns around the bandstand in Alexandra Park. Such were romantic to the last degree; the music being that of the tuneful 1930s such as The Touch of Your Lips, Goodnight Sweetheart, and The Very Thought of You, plus all the memorable tunes sung by Bing Crosby in the musical films of the era. At these dances the young ladies would wear dainty calf-length floral and lace summer dresses, the men grey flannel trousers and white open-necked shirts. Not a T-shirt or jeans to be seen! Dancing, or rather gliding, along the grass with a backdrop of moonlight and trees garlanded with fairy lights was an irresistible catalyst for holiday romances.

Mr Prossor concludes his letter: I, at every opportunity, fly out of the American capital with my destination being Hastings and my old and dear friends still living there. After all these years, that's where my heart is.

THE WAY WE WERE

1905 Allegations that a young child - whose parents could not afford to pay for a burial service but were too proud to accept charity from the Hastings Guardians - was taken to the borough cemetery in a sack and buried without ceremony, caused uproar in the town and comment in the national press.

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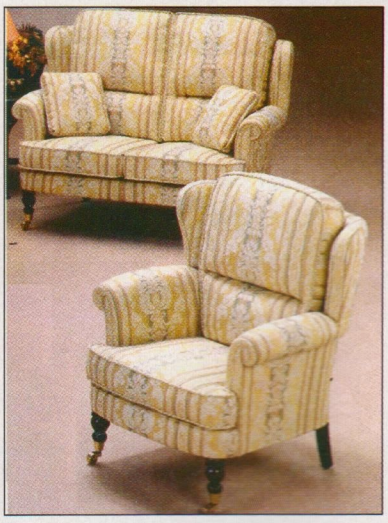

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MISS M. Burton of Cliftonville Gardens, St Leonards, sent us the photo above of her father, Albert Burton (right, wearing Corporal's stripes) taken during the last war.

He joined the Local Defence Volunteers, later to become the Home Guard.

Miss Burton says: "He is holding a stake which was, as far as I can remember, their only weapon for defence against the onslaught of a German invasion!"

THE WAY WE WERE

1906 In the early years of the century there were up to 200 street hawkers in Hastings, including up to 40 fruit barrows in the summer and regular flower and shrimp stands. When they began to be systematically charged with obstruction, they hit back with technical counter-charges of their own.

S Thunder, of Frederick Road, Hastings, sent us this delightful photograph of his uncle taken outside his bootmaker and repairer's shop in Priory Road in the late 1930s or early 1940s.

Mr Thunder worked in the shop until the early 1980s by which time, his nephew says, "it had become a meeting point for several old boys to meet and put the issues of the day to right."

Although courting a girl for more than 40 years he never married. He died in 1995.

THIS photograph was sent to us by Mrs Wyatt of Holmesdale Gardens, Hastings.

It shows a children's party in Bexhill Road celebrating the end of the war.

Mrs Wyatt's son, now 57, is pictured in the William Younger fancy dress costume, complete with beard and glasses.

Mrs Wyatt remembers most wartime birthdays were celebrated under an indoor air raid shelter.

She finishes: "Sometimes I think we were safer then than now."

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8 cinemas - and not a Playstation in sight!

THE flicks, the movies, the talkies - cinemas were the big leisure success story of the 20th century.

By the middle of the century Hastings cinema-goers had a choice of eight venues: The De Luxe, Gaiety, Kinema, Penguin, Plaza, Regal, Ritz and Roxy. Going to the pictures, unlike its later rivals television and computers, was a social event, and the biggest of the local picture houses had restaurants and cafes attached to them until well after the Second World War.

Pleasure yachts

The Albertine was the most popular of the local pleasure yachts and steamers which operated from Hastings Pier's two landing stages to France, Eastbourne, Brighton, Dover and the Isle of Wight until the late 1940s. In the early years of the century a day trip to Boulogne cost just five shillings (25p), little more than twice the price of a motor bus journey across town. To promenade on the Pier cost twopence (less than 1p).

Military Band concerts - a major attraction throughout the town - took place on the Pier every Sunday, with dancing every evening, a daily concert party giving several performances, and displays of high diving, a shooting range and other entertainments.

In the mid-60s, a Townsend hovercraft operated from the beach, but its was a short-lived experiment.

Will Davidson, The New Blondini, died when he fell and broke his neck when walking the tight rope at an Old English Fair at the Central Cricket

continued on facing page

THE WAY WE WERE

1908 With suffragettes and socialists holding noisy and disrupted open air meetings in the town throughout the year, hunger marchers descended on Hastings, where police denied them access to the sea-front, routing them to Boscobel Road, where they had a frugal meal of bread and cheese on a piece of open ground.

THE WAY WE WERE

1907 Hastings and St Leonards Ancient Order of Druids put on an entertainment for the inmates of Hastings Workhouse.

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from facing page

Ground in June 1905. In the same month escapologist Harry Houdini drew large crowds to Hastings Hippodrome - and he successfully accepted the challenge of a North Street 'lunatic attendant' to escape from his strait-jacket.

A section of the record-breaking crowd at the 1947 game between Sussex and Kent at the Central Cricket Ground, Hastings.

THE WAY WE WERE

1910 A daring professional lady thief stole valuables worth £300 in broad daylight from the Royal Victoria Hotel.

When the Prince of Wales opened the White Rock Pavilion in 1927 he was made a member of the Old Town's Winkle Club. Half a century later the Queen Mother was presented with a gold winkle brooch, but although on subsequent visits she challenged local dignatories to 'winkle up,' she is not in fact a member of the Winkle Club, which remains a men-only organisation.

THE WAY WE WERE

1909 A Battalion of Guards was despatched from London by 450 motor cars in March to relieve beleaguered Hastings from an imaginary invasion. The military exercise, observed by a huge London press corps, was intended to test the efficacy of the new motor-car for troop movements should the railway line be destroyed. Borough MP Col. Arthur du Cros provided many of the cars, and entertained the officers at the Queens Hotel.

The traditional Crowning of the May Queen, which took place in Linton Gardens and Alexandra Park, consistently attracted huge crowds. More recently the maypole has been supplanted by an even older spring ceremony, Jack in The Green, with a striking masked and costumed procession and Morris dancers throughout the Old Town and town centre.

Cricket popular

Cricket at the Central Cricket Ground, Priory Meadow, was a popular social occasion in the first half of the century, with middle class men and women packing the ground to watch county matches. The game was also a popular participation sport, with local teams playing on pitches all over the borough in the early hours of summer mornings before the start of players' working days.

After years of heated debate, Priory Meadow finally and controversially disappeared under a new town centre shopping development a couple of years ago, with Summerfields being upgraded as top local side Hastings Priory's home ground.

Golf took off locally as a sport for those with the time and money to play it when St Leonards Golf Course opened in Filsham Park in 1902.

No seaside holiday was complete without a souvenir photograph to take home. In the absence of instant cameras, it was the beach photographer, developing his pictures on the sport in a portable 'darkroom' who was always in demand.

Hastings' – and more especially St Leonards' – reluctance to compromise the fashionable image it had acquired in Victorian times, made it hard for the town to accept its downward slide in popularity and size throughout the early decades of the century.

The symbolic turning point came in 1903, when Hastings followed Bexhill's lead, and allowed mixed bathing in place of the previously enforced separate beaches with bathing machines to keep men and women decorously separated. At a stroke, the town was no longer a discreet health resort; it was now 'the seaside'.

(Though bathing machines were soon replaced by portable canvas changing tents, it was not for some years that 'macintosh

continued on page 8

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For long life, see Dr Bexhill

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Who could resist such a tempting offer? Very few, apparently!

As Bexhill was developing as a seaside resort, the sea air was regarded as a major inducement to visitors.

"The Official Returns of the Medical Officer of Health afford the most striking testimony of the health-giving properties of the climate."

So trumpeted The Kursaal Daily Programme, promoting the summer season of 1909.

This was the four-page information sheet put out by the hugely popular seafront theatre.

"The death rate in 1909 touched the unprecedented figure of 7.37 per thousand, which was little more than half the death rate for the whole of the country."

Helpfully, the Bexhill and national figures for the previously six years are detailed.

"The principal reasons for the healthiness of the locality are the bracing and stimulating properties of an extremely pure air, which, on the jaded, has the effect of a tonic, and the ill a gentle restorative; the open position of the town, there being no hills to hold mists or fogs, excellent water, modern house sanitation and a drainage system which has been carried out on the best expert advice, and on the efficient maintenance of which there is no economy of expense or trouble."

The final message: "For good health and a long life consult Dr Bexhill."

▲ You could hardly resist it, could you? Come to Hastings for the perfect holiday in England, said the posters in both English and French.

THE WAY WE WERE

1911 Mass emigration to Australia and Canada was becoming a serious problem for the town, with many hundreds of residents leaving Hastings every year under the assisted passage scheme.

from page 7

bathing' - going ready-changed to the crowded beach, with a coat hiding your swimming costume - was allowed, at a cost of threepence, half the price of a bathing tent).

The powerful hoteliers' lobby led local resistance to any general move downmarket, to cater for the day trippers (known by locals as 'Arry and 'Arriet) who were inexorably replacing traditional 'respectable' holidaymakers. As a result, when the Council finally agreed it had to act to halt the town's tourist decline, it decided to concentrate the trappings of kiss-me-quick daytripping to the Old Town, allowing the rest of the town to remain attractive to 'quality' longer-stay visitors.

THE WAY WE WERE

1912 A young white woman and a black man were charged under an old law (larency) after being seen walking and talking to each other as they crossed the Fire Hills.

1912 Many bodies were washed up on Hastings beach following the collision between P&O liner Oceana and the German barque the Pisagua in the Channel in April, around the time of the Titanic going down.

As late into the century as 1945, proposals by a new planning consultant that the Stade should be returned to the fishing industry, and day tripper facilities shifted back into Hastings and St Leonards, were promptly thrown out, along with their proposer.

His successor, Sidney Little - a man of controversial vision, who designed the covered Promenade and was known slightingly as The Concrete King - took an ambitiously contrasting view: turn the entire Stade over to a giant amusement park, and extend the promenade to Ecclebourne. After initially welcoming the proposals, the Council had to make a swift U-turn in the face of public outrage and lack of funds.

It was not just snobbery, but stinginess too, that held Hastings back from competing in a fast-changing 20th century leisure market. In 1911 the Council, unwilling to levy higher

Continued on facing page

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THE WAY WE WERE

1913 Hastings is reportedly one of the worst places in England for the neglect of children.
1914 A great gale along the south coast tears a 30ft by 14ft hole in the sea wall at Marine Parade.
1915 Randall Riding, head gamekeeper to Sir Hylton Brisco, catches two men poaching on the Brisco estate.

from facing page

rates or spend money, voted 37-3 against building a municipal theatre, which they wrote off as a white elephant. It was not until 1927 that the 1,400-seat White Rock Pavilion was built, with guest of honour the Prince of Wales (later, briefly, King Edward VIII) greeted by a range of model ships crafted by School of Art students and erected on pylons, to remind him of Hastings' Cinque Port status. Crowds sang Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory and Sussex By The Sea, and the national press declared it the best concert house in the country.

Over the years it hosted concerts conducted by the likes of Elgar, Sir Thomas Beecham and Sir Henry Wood, and musicians of the quality of Rachmaninoff and Paderewsky. Its concerts were broadcast empire-wide by the BBC, and Decca recorded them. By the 1950s, concerts had given way to light entertainment, and the Council initiated the summer variety seasons beloved of seaside resorts. In the mid-80s the Council gave it a £1.3million refurbishment, renaming it the White Rock Theatre.

Minstrels

The overwhelmingly popular entertainers up to the early years of the century were the black and white minstrel troupes originated by Christy's troupe. Local amateur troupes applied burnt cork and white gloves in crude caricature of southern state black Americans to raise money for local charities, and regular minstrel pitches sprang up on the Stade and the town centre seafront, with 'bottlers' taking collections from the ad hoc audience.

▲ Many locals have fond memories of days spent at the Old Bathing Pool.

As Minstrels' banjo-twanging lost its allure, pierrot troupes began to take over, but they soon gave way to more sophisticated concert parties.

Most celebrated of these were the Fol-de-Rols, resident summer season entertainers at the Pavilion from its opening until the war. Like London's famous Windmill Theatre, the Fol-de-Rols kick-started the careers of many of Britain's enduring performers. The Western Brothers, Arthur Askey, Richard Murdoch, Jack Warner, Walter Midgely and Mona Washbourne all played in Hastings as fledgling entertainers.

At the Pier Theatre, The Court Players, founded by ex-Fols' dancer Harry Hanson, provided competition.

What is today the ABC cinema in Queens Road started life as The Gaiety Theatre, a grandiose affair with a large canopied entrance.

Hastings' popularity as a resort continued to slide after the war, and the rise of television marked the slow death of stage 'variety'. St Leonards Pier, gutted by fire, was dismantled. Cinemas, created from failing theatres, in turn closed, or were converted into bingo halls or snooker clubs, and hotels were converted into flats or old people's homes.

And the town began to move inexorably into the age of electronic fruit machine arcades, historical themed audio-visual attractions, video stores and computer games that takes us, wonderingly, in the new millennium.

Russell Claughton

THE WAY WE WERE

1916 A Canadian soldier billeted in Hastings has his throat cut in a brawl with a compatriot in St Leonards.
1917 Substitute bakers are called for so existing bakers can be free to join up and fight in the war.
1918 Atmospheric mirages, mock-suns and 'strange apparitions' are seen in the town.

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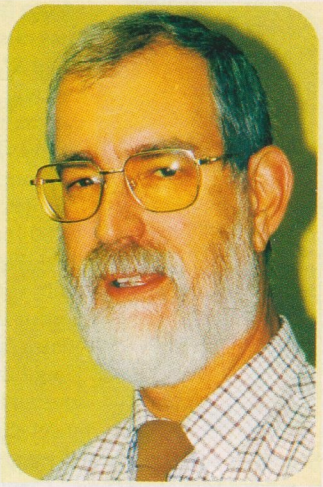
Prison riots, hurricanes... we've brought you the news

THE Bexhill Observer has been recording the news of the old Millennium for 103 (and a half) years.

Deputy Editor John Dowling has been reporting that news for 38 (and a half) of them.

So he dragged a few hoary recollections out of memory's cupboard.



THE WAY WE WERE

1919 Australia is beaten by some brilliant cricket at Priory Meadow.

1920 Miss Florence Nightingale Shore, relative of the famous nurse, is murdered on a Hastings train.

"SHAN'T be long. I expect they've set fire to the clothing store again..."

With these words to a long-suffering but ever-implacable wife, I set out for the busiest night's news that I can remember.

More than 400 prisoners had embarked on an orgy of destruction at Northeye Prison.

In accordance with an agreed emergency plan, staff withdrew to avoid the risk of presenting the rioters with hostages.

With ever-increasing numbers of police and a powerless fire brigade, they waited outside the perimeter wire as prisoners stoked up their hatred with fires which destroyed the hospital, library, dining hall, kitchen and workshops.

It was April 1986. Prisoner numbers had been expanded from 250 to 447.

The Board of Visitors (of which I was a member) had only recently warned in its annual report to the Home Office that there was a risk of violence or even death at Bexhill's Category C prison if it did not provide the manpower needed to curb unrest.

Shoving a burning toilet roll into the clothing store had been a time-honoured means for inmates to vent their frustrations. Generally, these grew greater with the more men were packed into the hastily-converted former RAF camp, created as a result of the Mountbatten Report into prison overcrowding.

We'd had fires great and small. I'd spent a Christmas at Northeye when inmates stoned a fire engine and crew. I'd spent a worrying Sunday morning trying, with the Governor and Chief Officer, to quell a baying pack threatening trouble at the sports field gate.

But these were nothing.

The Northeye Riot was part of a pre-planned night of violence throughout the prison service. Nationally, £4.8m worth of damage was caused of which the Northeye bill totalled £4.2m.

That was the measure of a story from which I returned shattered and shaken after 13 hours to breakfast, a wash and brush-up and some swift decision-making.

The riot was on a Wednesday night. The Observer was then a Thursday paper. It would be a week before we could tell one of the biggest Bexhill stories of the century.

With photographer Jimmy Burke, reporters Jo Glazier and John May and sub-editor Stella Graham I set about producing an eight-page Saturday "Northeye Special."

It cost 10p.

"Where do we start?"

The Great Storm of 1987 created havoc right across the South East. Our concern was simply Bexhill. But that was enough to put the tiny Observer team at full stretch.

Human interest stories, picture possibilities and drama were on every hand as dawn broke over a devastated town.

Issues that would have made the front page in any other week were reduced to "NIBS" - News In Brief paragraphs in Observerspeak.

continued on facing page

THE WAY WE WERE

1921 A German submarine being towed for salvage, breaks free and is washed up on Bulverhythe beach, where it becomes stranded for several months.

1922 A British seaplane crashes off the Marina, and its three crew are rescued from the sea.

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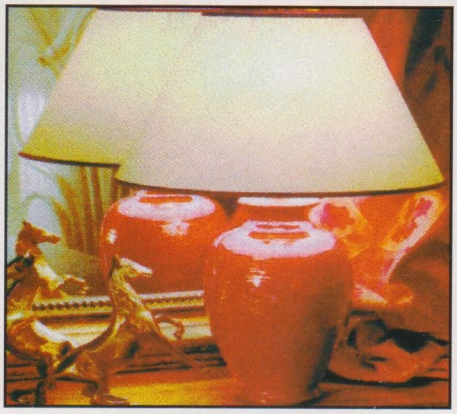

Above: just one example of high quality lighting and decor on display at Classic Lighting of Hastings

146 QUEENS ROAD HASTINGS
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THE WAY WE WERE

1923 Hastings' first major car smash occurred at Silverhill, killing one man and injuring nine other people.

1924 A stag hunt at Rye ended with the Kent Staghounds chasing a stag into the sea at Camber, from where it was picked up by a yacht and taken across the Channel to Etaples in France, where it was stabled. The Master appealed for the stag back, promising it would not be hunted again, but assured of a comfortable retirement.

from facing page

Like countless homes and businesses, the office lost its roof. But that was a mere incidental. What mattered was that, unlike others, we retained our telephones.

Town MP Charles Wardle and his wife Lesley were early visitors, anxious to find out where constituents most needed help – and keen to make use of our phone.

Pictures remain in the mind that are as strong as Jimmy Burke's photo images.

Crunching over the broken glass and tiles in South Cliff, I spotted a large, flat object in the road.

It was the roof of a house whose owner, with great dignity and sang froid, led me upstairs and declared "This was my bedroom."

In front of us raged an angry sea, above us a wild sky. The room had neither south wall nor ceiling..

In Cooden Sea Road the sound of chain saws drowned the still-shrieking wind.

The road was blocked by huge fallen trees. But an army of volunteers, from memory not a man under retirement age, was setting to work with a will.

The old cliche about "Dunkirk Spirit," heard at Northeye as staff without Home Office dictat used commonsense to restore order out of post-riot chaos, was never more true.

If 1940 was Britain's "finest hour" then the aftermath of the Great Storm, when volunteers worked alongside professionals and the homeless were given tea, comfort and temporary shelter, was surely Bexhill's.

Not content with 10 pages of Observer coverage, production colleague Philip Elms put together a special publication containing over 120 storm pictures covering Bexhill and Hastings. It sold 40,000 copies.

Shipwrecks

You can't be a journalist in a seaside town without covering a few shipwrecks. The Aghios Georgios II was my first in 1964. A pre-Great War freighter, laden with highly inflammable esparto grass, it caught fire off Beachy Head. It was beached by a grateful crew at Normans Bay, giving Bexhill Borough's

continued on page 12

FISHERMEN constructed a triumphal arch built of fish barrels, nets, flags, fish and flowers frozen in blocks of ice in the Old Town for the return of Hastings' most famous benefactor, Lord Brassey, from Australia in August 1900.

The town looked almost immediately to Lord Brassey to fund the completion of the harbour arm, dogged by a shortfall of £800,000 in the Corporation guarantee, almost half its cost.

A quarter of a century later, fishermen built an almost identical arch (above) to greet the Prince of Wales when he opened the White Rock Pavilion in 1927.

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Thomas Mepham's carrier service pictured in Bexhill, circa 1912.

THOMAS MEPHAM, my grandfather, was born in Battle (a town in which his ancestors had lived and worked for over 200 years). In 1900 he came to Bexhill with his wife, two sons and a daughter to start his own business as a carrier.

At one time carriers held a leading role in the field of communications, a position which changed with the advent of our railways.

Tom's first home and office in Bexhill was in Windsor Road where he found nearby stabling for his horses at Victoria Mews.

He began by providing a daily service to and from Bexhill and Hastings as well as a local service.

Shortly after the end of The Great War horses gave way to mechanised transport.

Traders operating their own delivery vans meant the deathknell for carriers by the end of World War II.

E. Mepham,
Oswald Court,
Bexhill

THE WAY WE WERE

1925 A worrying humming noise complained of by residents around Broomgrove Power Station was discovered by a visiting expert, Professor Low, to be caused by ash pits below the boilers acting as sound boxes.
1926 Tenant's wife in Hastings House claims to have seen the ghost of Mrs Siddons.

from page 11

westernmost outpost of empire the kind of national publicity not repeated until the 1999 floods.

The General Jacinto was badly holed in a collision on the French side, limped across the Channel and was abandoned so close inshore that its superstructure was briefly visible from the Observer office window in Sackville Road.

Cllr Ivor Brampton kindly but unwisely agreed to take Jimmy and me out to photograph the gaping hole on the far side in a lumpy sea to which his speedboat was not best suited.

"Just one more shot..." said Jimmy – and all hope of returning ashore dry was lost as a big green one sloshed over us.

"Looked out of your window lately?" asked a friend. When I nipped up to the bedroom I had a shock. The coastal motor barge Tern had broken its back in a storm and appeared to be heading straight for Glyne Gap.

It was no illusion. It WAS heading for Glyne Gap. In a feat of seamanship and under the guidance of lifeboatmen and coastguards with good local knowledge, the skipper beached the Tern in the only rock-free area.

Next morning I decided to take a second look. The tide was out and I always keep a pair of boots in the car.

I was able to stroll across the sands, hail the skipper, climb a ladder and get an interview and pictures denied those who are not habitual early risers.

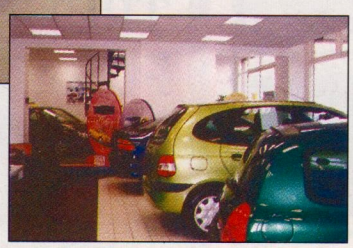
Ban that man from driving a van!

It was compensation in part for the enduring embarrassment of my first serious fire. "Move that van!" shouted a fireman (you could call them firemen in the early Sixties, not "firefighters").

Anxious for the Observer not to be seen to be hindering their work, I jumped behind the wheel, banged the office Mini van into gear and reversed over a hose, bursting it.

Embarrassment mounting, I found 1st gear and contrived to drive over and burst a second hose.

Exit one red-faced cub reporter in search of his first driving lesson...



Russells

OVER 100 years ago two companies were formed who were later to find their paths crossing due to their mutual pioneering spirit in pursuit of one of today's most important manufactured products – the motor car.

This co-incidence is one that neither of the company founders (Louis Renault and Louis Russell) could have foreseen at the time. Louis Russell established his first garage in Bexhill in 1896 and at almost the same time Louis Renault had built his first car in his garden shed.

Their paths finally crossed in 1955 when Russells and Renault joined hands and linked their businesses in an arrangement that has lasted 45 years. Russells Motor Garage was born, and survives today, by it's ability to satisfactorily serve the needs of the community. This originated in the 1890's when a handicapped gentleman required a custom built invalid carriage to carry him across rough terrain to the local shoot, which Louis Russell promptly designed and built. This was followed by the needs of a wealthy Indian Prince who needed powerful pumps to fill his large swimming pool from the sea.

From these diverse requirements Louis Russell turned a Cycle Repair business into a very successful garage. In fact, the name of Russell proved extremely prominent in the town's social service, resulting in Louis Russell becoming known as "The Father of The Bexhill Fire Brigade". This was caused by his clever adaptation of a Merryweather Steamer (Steam powered pump) to provide the town with it's first Motor Fire Engine. The volunteer Firemen spent their time (when not dousing flames) working in the workshops of a certain Mr Russell, maintaining the Fire Engine along with many other local transport machines.

Convenience dictated that both the Fire Brigade and Ambulance Services operated from the same location and that resulted in Russells building and maintaining the first of Bexhill's Motorised Ambulances as well. It wasn't until 1961 that the long association with the Services finished, and they were finally staffed by full time personnel. This proved to be a blessing in disguise, enabling Russells to devote all it's energy and expertise to the business of selling and servicing quality cars.

During the post-war years the business was run by Mr Arthur, later by Mr Alan and now by his son (the present Managing Director) Mr John Russell, in whose hands the Company still provides the quality products and services for which the name of Russells is well known. To secure the Company's long term future, Mr John Russell has enhanced the Management team by the appointment of three Directors so that all departments should now be closer to, and more responsive to, clients needs.

Along with these changes, Russells has moved closer to Renault by refining the interior of premises to be in keeping with the Renault Corporate Image. Hopefully our customers will feel more "at home" when visiting our premises, even if they are visiting us for the first time.

Therefore hopefully you will agree that Russells does not have, and never has had, a here today – gone tomorrow philosophy, and strongly believes in the tried and tested methods that are founded upon "The customer comes first" – "Thoroughbred Motoring from Russells" in Bexhill and Eastbourne.

A right royal day for a junior!

NEWS that the Queen was to visit Bexhill sparked great excitement among civic community and townfolk alike.

The subsequent revelation that the Duke of Edinburgh was to accompany Her Majesty provoked more eager headlines.

It was a big occasion for the town. And a big occasion for the Bexhill Observer.

The renowned editor of the day back in 1966 was L. J. Bartley, an admitted monarchist whose own CV boasted of covering "many royal events in the Sandringham area."

LJB's concern was twofold: how to cover the Friday visit in a Saturday newspaper and how to prepare to join the line of dignitaries to be presented to the Queen.

Needless to say for a man of his calibre, he rose to both challenges.

As an 18-year-old junior reporter on the paper at the time, my main job was to ensure that other, non royal visit matters, were taken care of while the rest of the office went royal watching.

Observer editor L.J. Bartley meets the Queen in 1966.

THE WAY WE WERE

1927 Detectives capture a gang of armed jewel thieves red-handed on New Year's Day after a series of thefts in Sedlescombe Road and Alpine Road.

1927 A woman was observed dancing the new craze, The Charleston, along the street from Burton's new shop to their old premises in Wellington Square, while reading a newspaper.

The Queen's itinary was known to us, so plenty could be written up in advance. She would be driven into the town around the Glyne Gap gas works; crowds would line the route; the pavilion presentation party were known (although if anyone had dropped dead on the day we might have been embarrassed). Then it was off to a children's home in Sutherland Avenue.

Even the community of Little Common set up its own Queen's visit committee (on which I served, along with the local police inspector and community volunteers) and it was fitting that the Royal car should slow to a crawl as it negotiated the village roundabout en route to Eastbourne.

Photographer Jimmy Burke took plenty of pictures of the visit.

While the royal party were being given a conducted tour of the De La Warr Pavilion – opened by the Queen's parents 31 years earlier – the paper went on the press.

The first clean copy to emerge was rushed back to the pavilion where LJB, proudly taking his place in the foyer presentation line, was able graciously to hand Her Majesty a souvenir of her visit.

The Queen seemed pleasantly surprised at such service.

With several more days to reflect on the visit before further considered coverage, the editor called me into his office - usually an invitation to a dressing down!

He thanked me for holding the fort while most other staff, including the redoubtable John Dowling, were otherwise engaged.

Then he invited me to help choose the pictures for the souvenir edition the following Saturday. I sensed he was being over-modest about selecting the picture showing himself being presented to the Queen.

It must be included, I insisted; our readers would expect nothing less (besides, I wanted to get on in journalism!).

He bowed to pressure from his office junior. And a prouder editor I never did see.

Philip Elms

Into The Millennium
With RUSSELLS AND RENAULT

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RENAULT

A Bexhill boyhood during the Second World War

STUART McCORMICK writes:

I WAS born on April 21, 1928 on Princess Elizabeth's second birthday, so was 11 when war began.

First barbed wire was erected along the Promenade and beach and anti-aircraft gun emplacements established. Galley Hill was out of bounds as it became the site of an Army Post (remember Spike Milligan?). No more summers spent on the beach. Unlike all my schoolfriends at Bexhill Grammar School for Boys (now Bexhill College and divided from the girls' half by a brick wall) I was not evacuated to Roans School in St Albans in Hertfordshire.

One day I was at the Bowling Ground in the Polegrove with my mother when I saw a lone German bomber drop its bombs. It completely demolished the chemist shop in St Leonards Road. In the back garden of my home at 5 Willingdon Avenue (usually on a Sunday afternoon!) I would watch as the hundreds of German aircraft flying overhead on their way to bomb large cities like London and Coventry were intercepted by aircraft from our own Fighter Command and dog fights ensued.

Later on in the war (I think it must have been a preliminary to the Normandy landings) I watched from Millfield Rise as a large flotilla of ships steamed off from Newhaven to Dieppe.

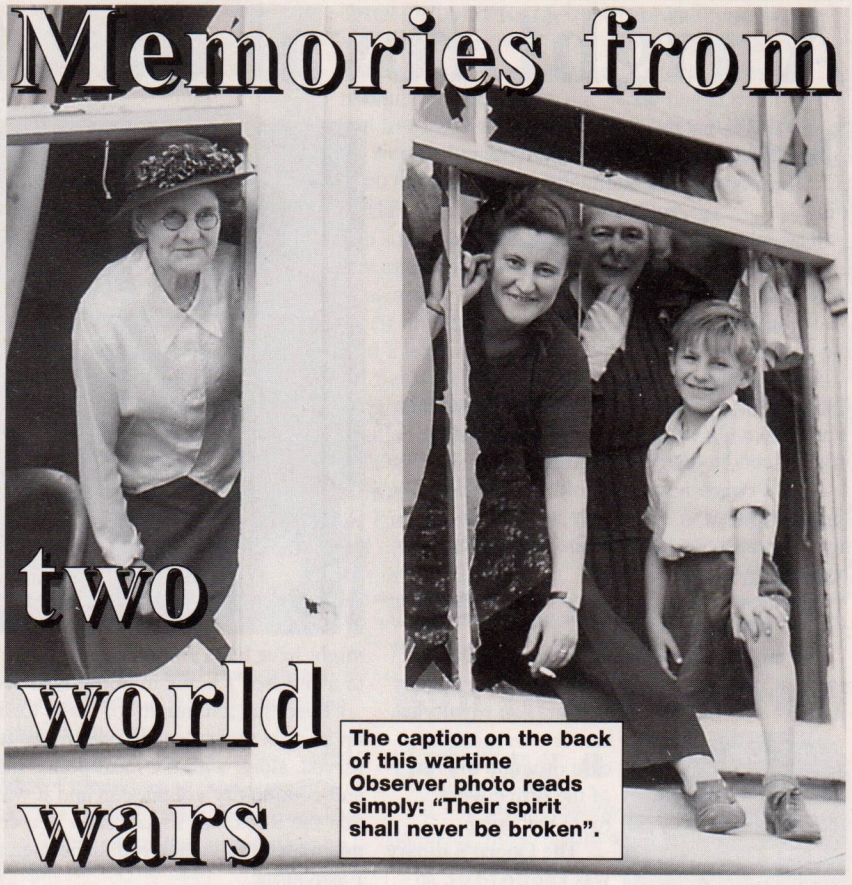
We regularly used to see a Hurricane and a Spitfire patrolling overhead. They were nicknamed Gert and Daisy after a popular Music Hall act of the time. Then came the doodlebugs (V1s). Unmanned, they came over singly from sites in France. The most frightening time was when the engine cut out and you knew it was going to drop out of the sky and hit something. One day I was playing tennis at courts in Chantry Avenue when I saw a doodlebug make a direct hit on the old Manor House in the Old Town. Gert or Daisy would fly up to one side of the doodlebug and with their wing tip the doodlebug off course so it would crash harmlessly in open countryside, such as the woods at Battle. The De La Warr Pavilion was never hit by German bombers because they used it as a landmark. Lying in bed at night I would watch as our searchlights pinpointed a doodlebug, recognisable by the blaze from it's rocket engine.

Bombing then became worse in London so the evacuees returned together with the Roans School pupils. At All Saints Church hall we had lessons in the morning only and Roans School took our place in the afternoons.

My brother, Tony, who was six years older than me, was called up. Days after D-Day he went across the channel as part of the invasion of France.

The war ended in 1945 so I was too young to be called up, but this did not stop two of my schoolfriends, Gordon Edwards and Jizz (Eddie Izzard's dad) from volunteering for the Navy. They never saw active service.

Memories from two world wars



The caption on the back of this wartime Observer photo reads simply: "Their spirit shall never be broken".

WHEN war was declared in the summer of 1914, a recruiting office for the volunteer national army was set up in Havelock Road under the command of Colonel Whittle. Despite a national campaign, local results were deeply disappointing, and a new local campaign was hurriedly assembled, with the band of the 5th Sussex regiment playing martial music as they marched through the town. Meetings were held at Priory Meadow and on the beach, addressed by local VIPs. The watching crowds would cheer every time a man signed up for the King's shilling.

1,300 killed

Life in Hastings was not initially affected by the war, though there were fears that it would hit trade. Women especially were officially encouraged to keep spending, and it was widely predicted the war would be over well before Christmas. By the time it actually ended, in November 1918, it had cost the lives of 1,300 Hastings men.

In December 1914 a meeting at the London Road Hall, Women Against the War, declared the war to be homicidal madness, and said it would not have started if women had the vote.

Until rationing was introduced in 1917, the war had little visible effect on the town, with beaches still crowded in the first few summers of war.

The only action the town saw was in the autumn of 1914, when a German Zeppelin, returning at night from a bombing raid on Portsmouth, hovered over the sea off the harbour arm before dropping a bomb on Cliff End, Pett Level.

THE WAY WE WERE

1928 Two men charged with undressing on the beach are each fined 2/6 (12p). Hastings Police force's new Flying Squad are issued with motorbikes and sidecars. A one-armed motorist, drunk, and driving at 40mph, was pursued through the town by police.

THE WAY WE WERE

1929 A Hastings boy was sentenced to a birching after stealing pens, a watch chain and books from the Grammar School with three companions. A father died after the exertion of thrashing his son, an inquest heard.

1929 A freak tidal wave struck the south coast during an unusually hot July day. In Hastings, it overturned several rowing boats, drowning one woman visitor, but paddling children had a miraculous escape. Two years later heavy seas damaged both piers and the parade.

Marching band

Hastings was used as a place to feed troops on their way to fight in France. Canadian troops used the town as a convalescent centre.

Local recruits - by 1916 no longer volunteers but conscripted aged between 18 and 40 under Lord Derby's scheme - left for the front by train, with a marching band to see them off at Hastings station with popular tunes of the day, such as

continued on facing page

This incredible photograph with huge crowds and a parade of soldiers had Observer staff flummoxed for a while. What was the occasion?
Sending our brave boys off on the D-Day landings, celebrating VE Day perhaps?
Neither. In fact, it's not even a wartime photo. Can you guess when it was taken and what the event was?
The answer is on page XVII.

from facing page

Keep the Home Fires Burning.
Wellington Square mansions were used to billet troops during the Great War.

Prince Albert, later King George VI, was attached to a squadron of the Royal Air Force Cadet Brigade stationed in Hastings, and marched at its head during King George V's inspection in August 1918.

U-boat beached

In April 1919, a year after the war had ended, a German submarine U118 broke free while on tow and was washed up on Hastings beach, becoming a popular attraction until it was dismantled and removed. Earlier, in July 1918, a British tank was displayed in the town.

In the four years between July 26, 1940, when the first Nazi bombs fell on the town, and August 8, 1944, when the last flying bomb was reported locally, Hastings & St Leonards suffered 85 enemy air attacks.

550 bombs fell on the town, including 27 which failed to explode, and a further 750 small incendiaries and 15 flying bombs crashed in the borough. Many more fell into the sea.

154 local people were killed in these air raids, 260 were hospitalised and 439 slightly injured. 463 buildings were demolished, 14,818 damaged.

THE WAY WE WERE

1930 The Elite Cinema was the first cinema in Britain to use state-of-the-art sound equipment when the talkies arrived in Hastings in the form of Bulldog Drummond.

1930 The Swan was refused a new licence on the grounds that there were 12 pubs within 100 yards of it; 26 within 400 yards. The Tiger in Stonefield Road was also turned down on the same grounds. Hastings had 202 pubs at the time - one for every 300 residents.

Beware invaders

Hastings was high on the list of invasion landing-places for the German forces, and the town suspected it was so. Barbed wire, road blocks, beach defences, bans on visitors, evacuation, invasion exercises, invasion meetings, alarms and rumours – these were the backdrop to the Second World War for the town. Hastingers could never be sure when the sirens sounded whether the Luftwaffe bombers were passing over on the way to London or the Midlands, or were going to harass Hastings on the way. Many slept in shelters, basements or underground carparks. St Clement's Caves were used as air-raid shelters, with 300 residents sleeping there each night, some of them the homeless whose houses had been destroyed in previous raids.

Bombs dropped

The Old Town had a miraculous escape in 1940 when nine bombs dropped in a string all the way along All Saints Street failed to explode.

The Plaza Cinema at the Memorial was not so fortunate, when a bomb exploded on its roof, killing 14 people including the popular cinema manager Fred Heppell and Hastings Pier Company secretary W.F.Brown, and terribly mutilating others. All four dials of the Memorial clock were blown out in the explosion.

Eight people died and eight more were hurt when a lone raider hit the Bedford pub in Queen's Road, and former Mayoress Phyllis Burden was pulled out of the wreckage of the WVS HQ in Havelock Road after a raid which wrecked several town centre buildings, killing three and injuring 10.

Railway motor fitter Reginald Gant, a 26-year-old member of the railway's home guard, won the George Medal for bravely blocking a hole in a blazing gasholder near Earl Street, and so helping avert a major disaster.

On Armistice Day 1940, poppy sellers braved 18 bombs, which demolished Kennards furniture warehouse at Mercatoria, and just missed Broomgrove Power Station.

A 23-year-old probationer nurse, Dorothy Gardner, also won the George Medal after receiving severe head injuries when she saved a patient's life by diving over her during a bomb-

continued on page XVI

THE WAY WE WERE

1932 After 227 accidents and six deaths on the seafront in 1931, a speed limit of 15mph was proposed for Marina, but rejected by the Council.

1932 St Clement's Church bellringers went on strike when the rector, Rev H. Cole, wanted them to ring quieter changes. The men insisted on ringing the traditional way or not at all.

1933 Old Roar Gill was opened by the Mayor, and named Tingle's Dingle after Cllr Tingle. The new Bathing Pool attracted over 33,000 swimmers in its first week.

Gates were among the items requisitioned to be melted down for the war effort.

from page XVI

THE WAY WE WERE

1934 Dare-Devil Peggy, a one-legged male diver, performed a Volcanic Dive from 70ft above the Bathing Pool with fireworks strapped to his body. Because they were placed the wrong way round, his stomach was badly burnt, but he completed his stunt.

1934 Two members of the Sun Bathing Society read an article on nude bathing in Hastings and tried to bathe naked in the sea, but were prevented by police.

bombing raid on the Royal East Sussex Hospital.

Voluntary firewatcher Frank Eastes won the British Empire Medal for saving an injured colleague at Broomgrove Power Station after an incendiary attack, getting badly burned in the process.

The two-year-old daughter of the Rev Jason Battersby was among the victims on a raid on Emmanual vicarage and church, which killed five and seriously injured 12.

In September 1942 a tip-and-run raid hit Warrior Square, West Hill, Quarry Hill and De Cham Road, and destroying a National Institute for the Blind home in Quarry Hill, killing two inmates and the matron, as well as a further 20 townspeople.

Rescue Party Leader Sydney Oak received a George Medal that year for tunnelling under an unstable Pevensey Road house and staying with a trapped woman for two hours until she was rescued.

Only the tower and spire and the crucifix in the sanctuary remained after St John's Church, Upper St Leonards, was razed by a direct hit in 1943. The same year a bomb went straight through a house next to Hollington Police station in Battle Road, bounced over the Tivoli pub, and exploded in Adelaide Road.

On Sunday lunchtime on May 23 that year, 25 people were killed and 30 seriously injured in a huge raid which hit five pubs and two hotels, demolishing the Swan and subjecting the crowded Queen's Hotel to the narrowest of squeaks.

In January 1944 David Ligat, an eminent surgeon aged 72, had his right arm blown off by a bomb close to his Filsham Road home. Popular artist E. Leslie Badham was killed that spring, along with his daughter, when his Priory Road home was hit.

The first doodlebug or V2 flying bomb was brought down by anti-aircraft guns at Glyne Gap that summer. Over the next two months the town watched anti-aircraft defences and brave fighter pilots take on hundreds of these new weapons as they winged their way to London, bringing down 15 in Hastings, and 374 in the Battle area.

Belgians escape

In May 1940, just after the invasion of Belgium, two Belgians landed in Hastings, coal-begrimed, wet and haggard, carrying 13 million francs in two suitcases. They were senior officials of the state railways, and they had escaped with the entire payroll of the railway, on a grimy tugboat.

Boats blown up

Several fishing boats were sunk during the war, despite doing their part in rescuing German aircrew ditched in the sea. The Happy Return and Boy Billie were blown up when mines caught in their nets. The fleet's biggest boat RX152 was fired on by enemy aircraft and one of her crew killed; she too was later blown up by a mine.

7,000 children, most from south east London, were evacuated to Hastings shortly before war was declared, a mutual culture shock for the children and the town; there was unprecedented demand for headlice treatment, waterproof sheets and fish and chips! It was not long before Hastings itself was declared an evacuation area, and the town's children followed the London children to safer parts of the country. Many adults were evacuated too — and vets were inundated with sad evacuees having their pets put down.

THE WAY WE WERE

1936 Bonzo the performing flea was killed by lightning while performing on St Leonards Pier.

1937 A competition to name the new Marine Court building produced suggestions ranging from Sunny South Court to Mammon Court, Monstrositic Mansions and Havnokare.

1938 Earth tremors were felt all over the town.

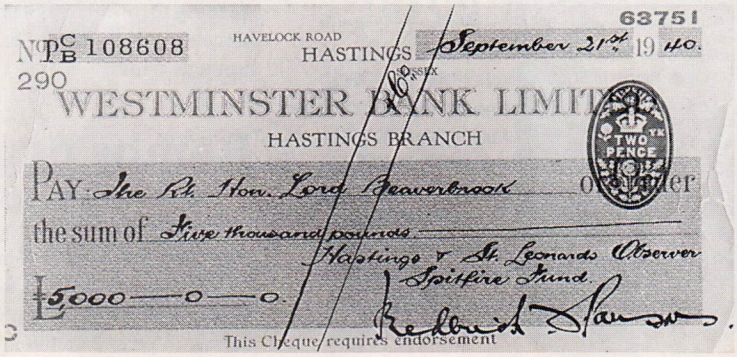
Local Blackshirts were rounded up soon after the start of the war and their leader sent to Lewes Prison; others, including two single ladies, were held in Hastings. It was also decreed that no foreign national could live within 20 miles of the coast, and Hastings lost several prominent business families, mostly Italians.

Invasion troops were based in Hastings in the run-up to D-Day, and in Salute The Soldier Week, May 1944, Prime Minister Winston Churchill - also Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports - and Field Marshal Smuts inspected the troops and toured the town. Two British fighters patrolled the skies overhead to protect the VIPs.

Hastings' civil defence organisation was so efficient that its rest centre system was adopted throughout the country.

Spitfire fund

Hastings & St Leonards Spitfire Fund was launched in August 1940 by the Observer. Alderman A. Blackman, Coronation Baron of the Cinque Ports, offered £1,000 if the townspeople donated the balance of £4,000 within a month. Although evacuation posters went up days later, and many women and children hurriedly left the town, the total was exceeded in good time **(see the cheque below)**, with at least 20,000 people contributing. Townsfolk watched the Battle of Britain being fought in the skies overhead in September.



▲ Wartime British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had an affinity with Hastings. He was asked back to the town in 1955 by Mayor Frederick Hussey to attend a Cinque Ports ceremony.

Tank traps and minefields

THE WAY WE WERE

1939 A man was fined 20/- (£1) for having performing mice within 250 yards of the sea without a permit.

1940 A man was imprisoned for six weeks and fined £10 for taking pictures of bombed buildings without permission.

FOR five years Bexhillians had to wait behind barbed wire, tank traps, pillboxes and minefields for a glimpse of the sea.

No wonder Heather Bishop's Millennium Memories include the day the seafront was re-opened to walkers.

"It was October 1944. Everyone went down there. I went with my friend Pam Dennett and we were photographed by the Observer walking along the prom.

"I would have been about 15 at the time. We were just out for a walk.

I think practically the whole town was out that day walking along there."

Places like the Colonnade had been heavily sandbagged and turned into air-raid shelters as early as 1939.

At that stage London children were evacuated to Bexhill, then considered a safe area.

But with the Fall of France, post-Dunkirk Bexhill became a heavily fortified area in anticipation of the Nazi invasion which, thanks to the RAF and the Battle of Britain, never came.

Most of front-line Bexhill was evacuated. Children lined up at Central Station with their gas masks and their labels round their necks to be taken to safer areas.

Heather says: "My mother would not let us go. So we stayed...

"My father, a railwayman, had bought a house in Crowmere Avenue. It was one of the first estates of its kind. Miss Burrows, of Ancaster House School, set up a trust which had them built so ordinary people could buy a home.

"I still live there.

"I went to St Peter's School. They built air-raid shelters out in the playground. When the siren went we had to dodge out of little doors cut in the walls and run into the shelters.

"At one stage we shared the school with evacuee children. We went there in the mornings and they went there in the afternoon while we had to walk up to Worthingholme private school in Hastings Road."

Heather's memories also include the day a badly-damaged USAAF B17 Flying Fortress ditched in the sea off The Sackville Hotel on its return from a raid.

"We all went down to see the crew brought in.

"One day a bomb dropped in the old Barrack Road cemetery. For years after we were digging up old bones in our garden!"

● Give yourself two points if you correctly identified the photograph on page 15 as the Prince of Wales opening the White Rock Pavilion in 1927.

I remember first bombs dropped

MY home was number 16 Gladstone Terrace, Hastings. I was about 12 years old and had a paper-round in Ore Village, near Christ Church. One morning about 6.30, I took a handicapped lad who lived in number 11 Gladstone Terrace with me on the paper-round.

Every thing went well until returning home along Priory Road, we saw a German Dornier bomber flying down the valley over the Power and Ore railway station. "GREAT" all the adventure stories and films that filled my head were happening in real life. We saw the bombs come out, but missed the target by miles. What a rotten bomb aimer! We rushed home to tell our story. These were the first bombs dropped in Hastings.

THAT WAS THE DAY I GREW UP

GETTING to the top of Whitefriars Road, we found a crowd of people and the word was "Everybody in Gladstone Terrace was killed". We were not allowed to get to our homes. "But we live here!!" Back around the surrounding streets, with, by then a demented boy. Every entrance to Gladstone Terrace was cordoned off with ropes. We eventually arrived at the bottom of the narrow road, which lead from Gladstone Terrace and our house, which was on the end of the terrace. The house was still standing, but we still couldn't get to it. Not knowing what to do, we just waited. Then suddenly from the house came my sister. She grabbed us out of the crowd and took us indoors. Mum was there, Dad and brother Fred must have gone to work. Number 11 was totally demolished. Isn't it terrible I can't remember what happened to the lad's family?

Across the road another house was damaged, the bombs were quite small at that time.

Later the man who lived there, asked Mum if I could move some coal from a wooden shed which was knocked down. I set to work but for some reason I was stopped. The Army found an unexploded bomb in the coal.

Everyone in the street had to spend the day in the church hall in Vicarage Road whilst they moved it.

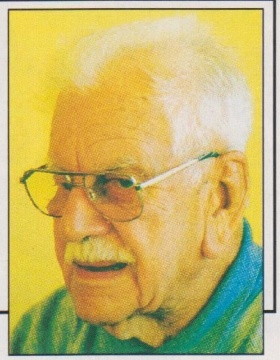
I think they exploded it on the wasteland off Croft Road (Referring to a booklet recently, called Hastings & St Leonards in the Front Line, printed by the Observer, I discovered the bombs were dropped on Friday, July 25 1940 at 7.15am.

So I was just 13. One person killed in Priory Road, 2 seriously and 7 slightly injured. So at least no-one was killed in Number 11).

War was not an exciting adventure anymore.

Zeppelins over Sussex

Not for the first time, Observer deputy editor John Dowling tapped his father's considerable store of local memories for a glimpse of what Bexhill was like during the First World War. Retired gas fitter Perce Dowling was a contributor to the first edition of the oral history Bexhill Voices. He was born in 1905 and was brought up in Cornwall Road. Here, he gives an insight of what boyhood was like in Bexhill during the First World War.



"IT was a colossal thing. It seemed as long as the entire street!"

It needs a long memory now to recall the days when Zeppelins caused terror over Britain.

Those who saw the raiders at close quarters swear that nobody who hadn't shared the experience could imagine how big they were.

Perce Dowling recalls:

"We heard this tremendous clattering one day. I ran out of the front of the house and looked up.

"A Zeppelin was cruising over. It was so low it looked as if it was going up the street.

"It was so low, then, that you could see Jerry leaning out of the gondolas..! Cheeky blighters.

"You can't imagine how big those things were - or how slow. It seemed to cast a shadow over Cornwall Road.

"Of course, Jerry knew he could get away with it. We had no anti-aircraft guns in those days. He just cruised about as he wanted.

"We lads went mad, jumping up and down and shouting. The adults were not too pleased. There were a lot of scare stories about Zeppelins in those days. Compared with the Second World War, it was nothing. But it was new and it frightened people, though I don't remember Zeppelins dropping any bombs round here.

"I did quite well out of that war as a lad, I suppose.

"All of South Cliff was a school of trench warfare. The Canadians were there for a long while.

"Cooden camp up at Cooden Mount was enormous. There were troops everywhere around there.

"A pal of mine did a paper-round out at the camp. One day he said to me 'Want to earn a bob or two..?'

"I said yes and he got me a job delivering papers out there. I did all right for myself.

"I used to get up early and pedal out there before school at St Barnabas'. The first day I went to the sergeants' mess and they said 'Had your breakfast, son?'

"I said 'No' - which was stretching things a bit. They gave me a slap-up breakfast, bacon and eggs and heaven-knows-what.

"I went to the officers' mess and they also asked if I'd had breakfast.

"It was like that every day..I was well off!

"I remember they had a bear as a mascot. I kept away from him, though he never seemed to be any bother.

"One day I came a cropper. An officer called out to me that he wanted a paper. Unfortunately, he stuck his stick out in front of me before I'd had time to stop my bike.

"The stick went through the spokes of my front wheel. Over the handlebars I went. I was bruised and winded but my bike was wrecked!

"When I went back the next day the lads had fixed my bike for me. Good as new it was — and I had my two breakfasts!

"One morning I went out as usual and the place was empty. The whole lot had gone. I had a wander round and, to my joy, I found a pair of new boots. Well, that was corn in Egypt in those days. You were very lucky if you got a new pair of boots. I tried one on and rode home as fast as I could to tell my people.

"But my old chap said 'You silly young blighter - they're two left feet!'

"I often wonder if some soldier went to France with two right boots...

"I remember when the war started, the Army came round and requisitioned all the horses. This was in the days when practically all the transport was by horse and cart. Your milk, your coal, everything came by cart.

"There was a lot of fuss about taking the horses. It was a terrible war and the horses suffered horribly. One lady we knew had a particularly fine horse she was very fond of and she kicked up a fuss when the Army came to take it. Before they came back for it she had it put down by the vet. She couldn't bear to think of it suffering at the front.

"The paper was full of stories about local men volunteering for the Army. Later, there were local columns of 'local heroes' who had lost their lives.

"I often wonder what happened to all those young men who used to make sure I got my breakfast at Cooden camp."

THE WAY WE WERE

1941 A former Hastings woman's death sentence for distributing anti-Nazi propaganda in Paris was reduced to a prison sentence.

1942 A woman was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour for keeping a disorderly house for the use of local soldiers.

THE WAY WE WERE

1943 A pet rabbit - one of three that survived a German bombing raid that killed six others - developed a distinct V (for Victory) in black fur on its forehead.

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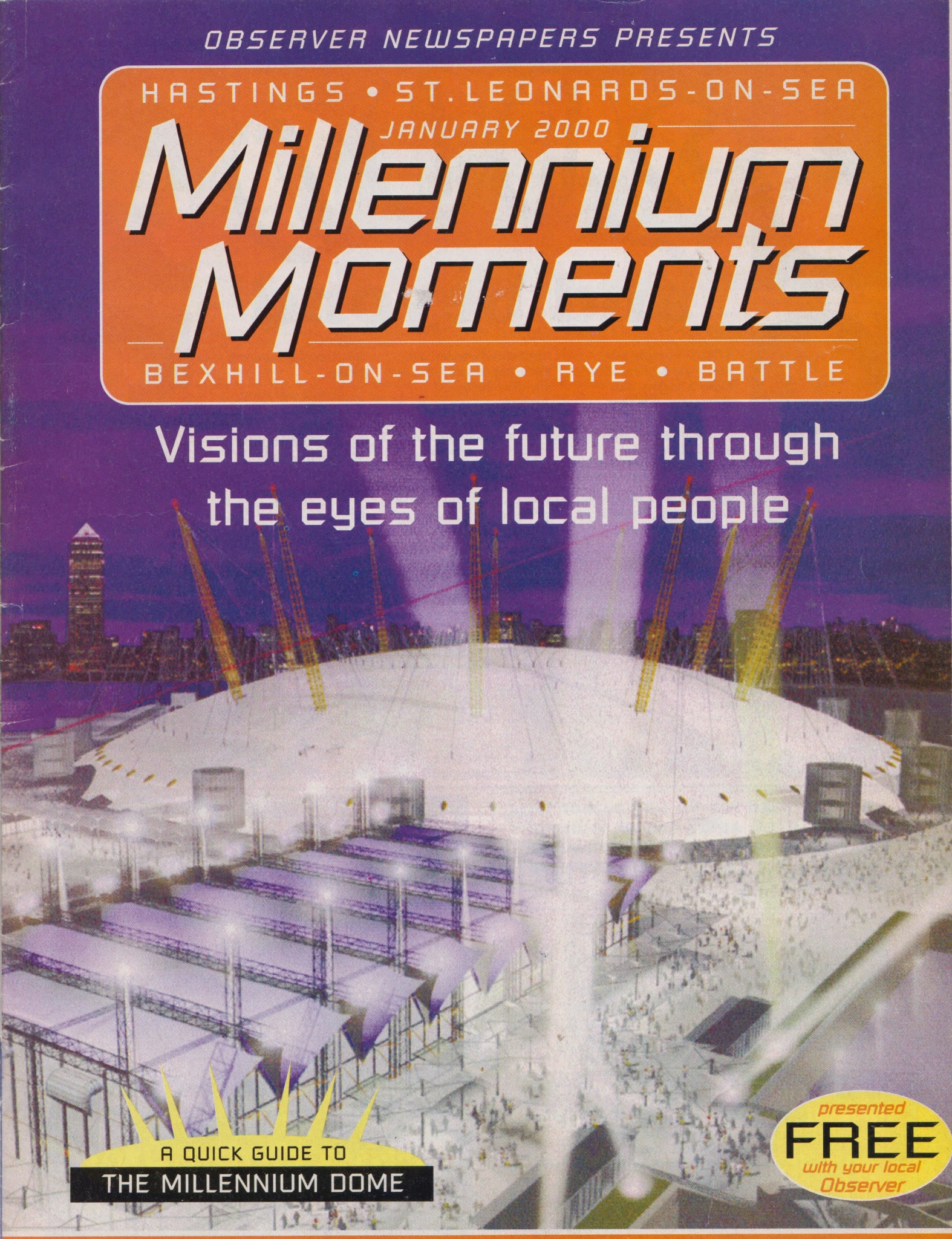
JANUARY 2000

Millennium Moments

BEXHILL-ON-SEA • RYE • BATTLE

Visions of the future through the eyes of local people



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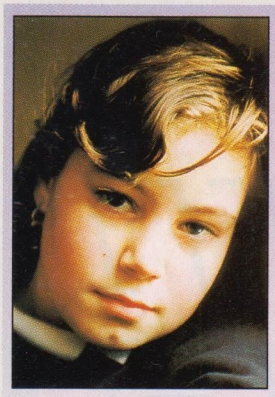
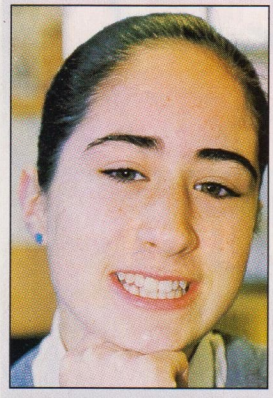
PLUS THOUGHTS FOR THE MILLENNIUM BY LOCAL CHILDREN



2000 and beyond



YOUNG people are rarely given a voice in today's society but, ultimately, it is they - our children and grandchildren - who will shape this new millennium.

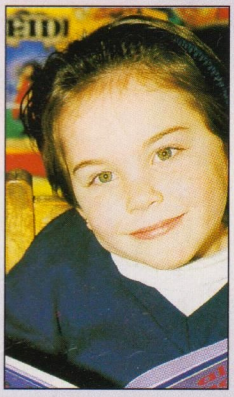
We gave the youngsters of Hastings, St Leonards, Bexhill, Rye and Battle the opportunity to tell us their hopes and fears for the year 2000 and beyond.

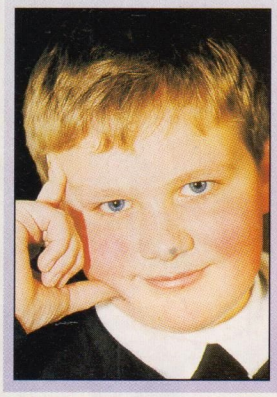
They wrote articles and poems. Some of the material was factual, some of it fictitious.

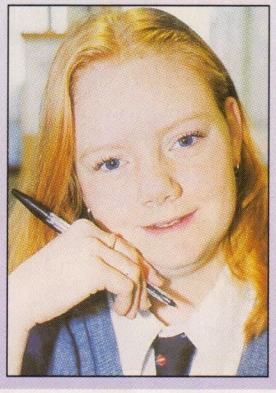
But it was all creative and blessed with a fresh perspective that only a young, hopeful, questioning mind can bring.

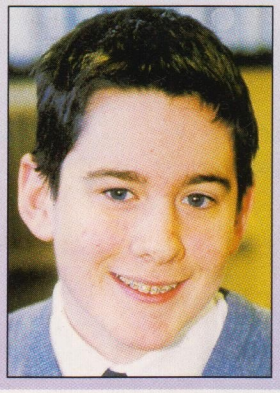
Global warming, Third World debt, crime and media pressure all figure highly on the list of priorities our teenagers want tackled.

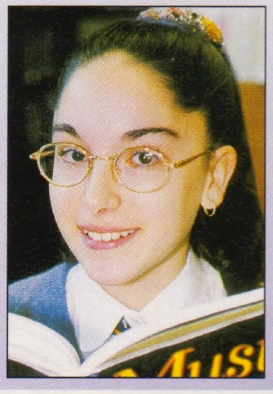
On the following pages we present a selection of their ideas.











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2000 and beyond

Unleash your Inner Kid

LEARN to live a little.

Parents. You love 'em and you hate 'em, don't you? Present from birth, they have always been there to give you fresh nappies; food is immediately delivered to your every wail and they can't help themselves from spoiling you rotten by buying all the teddies, mobiles and irresistibly cute little dresses they can get their grubby little hands on.

Now, this is all very well, but what I would like to know is why did it all have to stop? Is there some invisible, unspoken Book of Parenting somewhere that directly states that beyond a certain age, children should be told off when they constantly ask for food? Even trying to ask for the current cute little dress, is now, suddenly unheard of.

As we advance towards the next century of parenting, it seems a good time to look back and reminisce upon our childhood years and perhaps question the rules and regulations that our nearest and dearest inflict upon us at an early age.

Much as I hate to admit it, I love and respect my parents dearly but when it comes to setting guidelines for me, I am the first to question their very existence. Why, for instance, am I now suddenly expected to grow up and be sensible?

It came as rather a shock to me at the tender age of 12 entering junior school, to be lumbered with the dreaded word "responsibility". My only wish was to bumble along as I always had done, enjoying my life and not having to worry about anything.

So I have now decided that my aim for the Millennium is to try and appear more grown up and mature, but on the inside still keep the fun and playfulness of my younger years.

Truth is, I loved being a kid. I loved being a kid and I miss it dearly. People complain that I play the fool, that I don't take things seriously enough and can act very "childishly" when I want to.

People even pity me for not having the ability to think realistically, but the way I see it is that I'm just a kid at heart.

I can't help it, and I'm certainly not going to be ashamed of it. I can only pity people who have not yet discovered their Inner Kid, and who are too boring – sorry, serious – to unleash it.

Your Inner Kid is your friend, always ready for fun and laughter, and when fully unleashed will make the owner a relaxed, spontaneous and light-hearted individual.

Your Inner Kid is the cure to a midlife crisis. It puts an end to menopausal hormones and almost ensures a healthier and longer middle-aged life.

The problem is, parents haven't yet cottoned on to this marvellous remedy, and I wouldn't advise holding your breath waiting for it to happen.

The power, my friends, lies in the children themselves. If we can protest to our beloved parents feeling as if they have to act like green-eyed monsters, if we can open their eyes to the fantastic concept of fun that is so mysterious to them at their age, then perhaps the process of aging as we know it can be amazingly altered.

I'm not complaining that parents are "past it", that they live their lives monotonously and unspontaneously devoting every living minute of their lives to their beloved children.

In fact I'm trying to point out is that at some point our parents stopped looking at life as a daily thing to explore and find out about, and suddenly started planning.

Once again, I blame the invisible Book of Parenting for this one. My parents have plans for everything; the house, the dogs, the mortgage, me, even my pet fish has been planned for!

They cannot look at life as an exciting adventure of the unknown any more, because as far as they're concerned they're over the hill, and rolling down the other side. They've been there, done that and got the injury to prove it.

This is where the Inner Kid Syndrome comes into process.

We as adolescents, have to try and kick-start our mums and dads, to push them up out of the never-ending rut of life as they know it.

At first it will be tricky. Persuade them to go out one evening, offer to cook a meal to show that you can survive in the house without starving.

You'll know you've made the breakthrough when they, for the first time do something spontaneous.

After this, life will be fantastic, the Inner Kid will be emerging from your parents, the mid-life crisis will cease to exist and your mother will never throw a hormonal strop again.

Well this is the theory anyway. In practice it may be a bit more tricky.

The one thing you have to do now, as a new generation of positive future mummies and daddies, is never to forget your childhood.

Enjoy your teenage years for what they are, but never forget the innocent years you spent as a kid, looking for excitement and adventure and not having any cares, worries or stress. These were always the best.

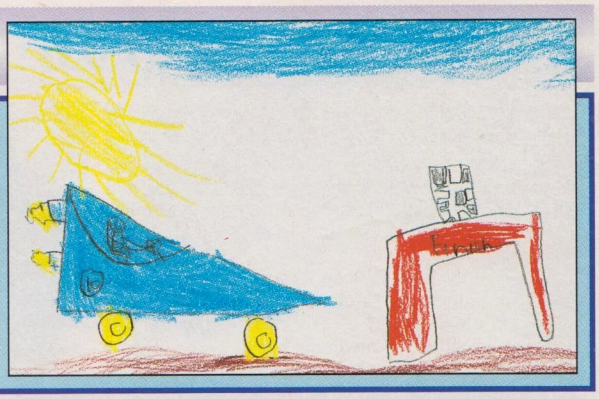
As the New Year begins, try to put fun into every day. Smile, be happy and sparkle, because with this you will go far. Treasure your own Inner Kid for, if you learn how to use it, you will have it for life.

Claire Hazle, age 15, Battle Abbey School.

My Millennium Wish

I wish that cars would always start straight away, not like mummy's car.

William Baxter, age 5, Westerleigh School



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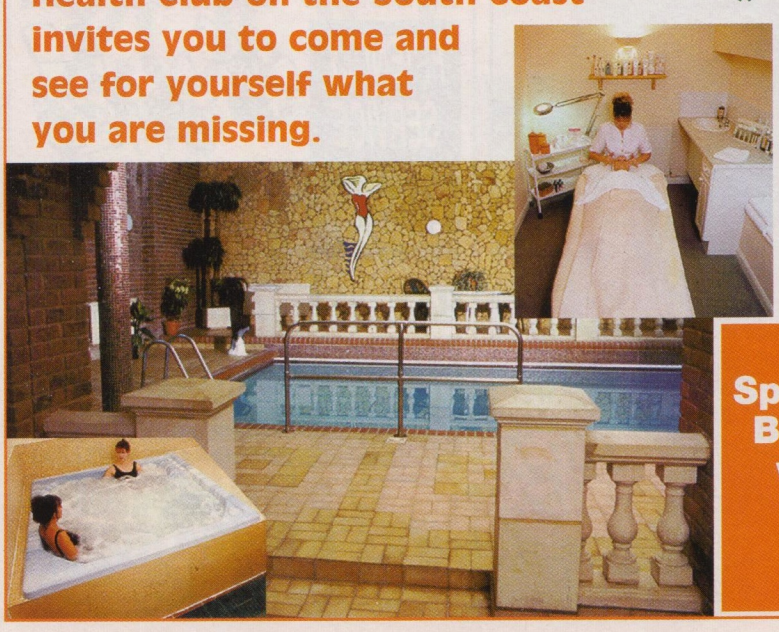

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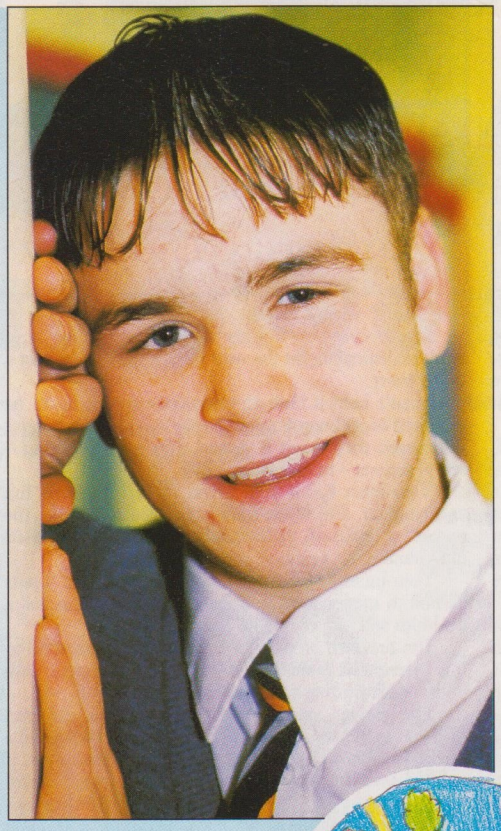
2000 and beyond

TWENTY-FIFTY

My, my, we've come on in the last fifty years
What with cancer cures and now everyone hears
With the brand new invention for deaf and dumb
It taps into your brain via a plug through your thumb
AIDs is gone and HIV's on its way
We have cloned and re-cloned
"We don't have a say"
In what the future of medicine brings
"For we're going forward" the scientist sings.
But a middle-aged man of 80, no less
His prolonged life is becoming a mess
And can he escape from his spiralling life
Which was kicked off by the death of his wife
He just wants to die a natural death
But 80 more years he has in him, no less
So if the next 50 years are one and the same
Billions more people will be playing the game
Of life and the board will become too small
"We'll live on Mars" screams the next know-it-all.
And when I walk out into my garden on Mars
I'll remember my time with road driven cars
When everyone looked back to the past and recalled
Life was much better without know-it-alls
So I guess it is all sentimentality
That is affecting my own mentality
Towards life in the future for all
But for me it's the past that holds our souls.

Robert Humpage
age 14
St Richard's Community College



MILLENNIUM

The Millennium spells change for the entire world
Just as it did 2000 years ago
When Christ was born
In a stable forlorn
And the story of his life we all know.

1000 years later, in 1066
A battle was fought in our land
Harold and Willy
Behaved very silly
And thousands were killed on the sand.

The next Millennium will be different though
As technology rules AOK
As satellite dishes
And radioactive fishes
Are the price we have to pay.

Cars and lorries will drive themselves
Spaceships will be commonplace
We'll eat moon dust
Have an implanted bust
And a genetically modified face.

Intelligence will spread to sheep and pigs
And their lives will change very soon
They will become commuters
Use mobile phones and computers
And no doubt they will fly to the moon.

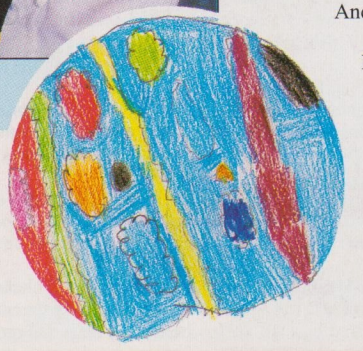
But man must be sensible in the new Millennium
'Cause we'll all be robots in the sky
And we'll control this place
From the planets in space
And at the touch of a button
Bye Bye!

Emma Beaumont, age 12
Claremont School

My Millennium Wish...

I wish that everyone who is sick has enough money to get better.

Monsita Pearce
Age 5
Westerleigh School



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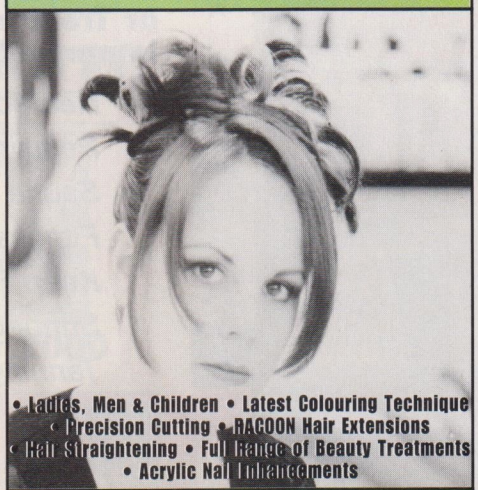

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2000 and beyond

It's the end of the world as we know it

HELLO, this is Jack Millina reporting from Battle, East Sussex just before the turn of the next Millennium.

The streets are packed full of people in shorts and t-shirts and slapping on the suncream. Unfortunately neither this or any other method will save them from the terrible fate that awaits us on this scorching, hot December day.

The White House received a message from the science department working on global warming this morning.

According to them our time as humans living on earth is over. The sun is right now hurtling towards earth at an alarming speed.

The barrier between the Universe and us has after years of pressure collapsed leaving the world in utter chaos. In a matter of minutes (about an hour) the human race will have ceased to exist.

The presidents, the monarchies and all their families are being transported to Mars until the incident is over.

One of the scientists said, "The structure of global warming was most affected at the beginning of the 21st Century. If they had been more careful this would probably not be happening."

The earth is coming to an end. You would think there would be a mad rush to the nearest swimming pool of a friend's house.

It is surprisingly calm for such a traumatic time, but then again you can't run and hide. Most of the people in Battle are lying quietly on the pavement, hand in hand, eyes closed.

The street is almost silent apart from the occasional gasp or groan from one of the many dying people. Dogs, cats and other animals lie on their sides panting as the road melts and bubbles.

Many people are thirsty but now the only sort of liquid is the tarmac as it rolls down the pavement.

As the President boarded the shuttle he said,"I am 40 years old and I have seen 40 years of the world as it slowly kills itself. Now it is not the adults that I feel the most compassion for, it is the children; babies dying in their cribs, toddlers screaming out in pain due to the scorching heat and pregnant mothers giving birth to premature babies because of the heat.

Their cries are all the same as in their dying breath they all shout, "Why did it have to happen to us?"

We no longer even use cars or factories and the robots we use give off no fumes. If anyone deserves this it's the people back in January 1, 2000, who just couldn't be bothered to stop and think, to change their ways and in the end to save lives.

So in my dying breaths, I'll say one thing. If this ever gets printed and if any person or thing ever reads this then I will tell them one thing:

Don't waste your life like I did waiting for the end to come. I rushed around as many other people did. I took the world and its thousand beauties for granted. I was selfish and shallow because I never sat back and relaxed without feeling lazy.

I never relaxed and took time to smell the roses. Because sooner or later just like me life will be snatched cruelly from your grasp never to be given back.

Then you will never have been able to smell any of life's sweet perfumes which were laid out before you.

I regret everything I have ever done now, because it is all worthless and it means nothing. No matter how pretty or ugly, rich or poor, fat or thin you are in the end you all wind up in the same place.

And there you will be forgotten because you never bothered to sit back, relax and throwing your cautions to the wind, smell the roses.

I am Jack Millina signing off for the last time ever.

Goodbye world. Goodbye people. Hello sun.

Georgina Caine, age 12
Battle Abbey School

MY MILLENNIUM WISH

I don't want any bombs to fall
I don't want any war at all
No more people in cardboard boxes
No more people killing foxes
People should be really kind
People should be feeling fine
I don't want anyone to bite
I don't want anyone to fight
I don't want people to be poor
Or people falling on the floor
I want the world to be safe
So we can grow in a good kind place.

Laura Over, age 6
Westerleigh School

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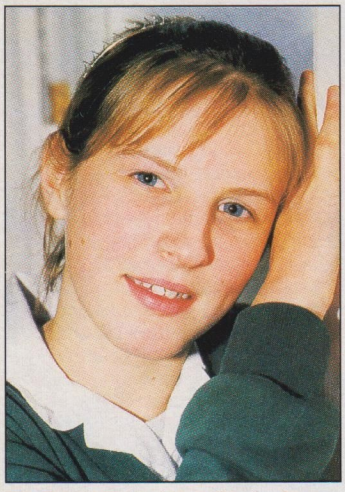
2000 and beyond

Many problems, but so much potential



EVERYONE has hopes for the future and we all can do is try to achieve these goals and make our dreams real. These ideas are for our home town, our world and our personal dreams. With the Millennium arriving is there a better chance to achieve them?

Hastings has many problems which a lot of people would like to put right. So if everyone was to put their hopes for Hastings into action we could make it a better place in which to live. For example it should be thoroughly cleaned up. The seafront is a dirty area and when Hastings is on the news they always show the seafront; the alcoholics, the worst parts. It always has drug users, alcoholics and beggars. It shows our town in an unpleasant light. These problems ruin Hastings' reputation as a fun, safe, tourist town.

My hopes to improve Hastings would be for alcoholism to be reduced and for the law against crime to be enforced more strongly. Hastings needs to be a safer place to be in at night so that people can go out alone without the fear of being attacked.

All these things can't happen at once but they can in time with help from the vast majority of the community. If everyone was to pull together then our town could be a nicer place in which to live. The town has tremendous amount of traffic which causes many accidents and so much pollution. If it was only reduced to a small amount then it could stop a lot of pollution in the air.

Traffic safety could be increased if fewer cars were on the road. To reduce traffic the council could build a by-pass which would decrease traffic on the main roads, such as Bexhill Road where people have petitioned for a bypass because of the amount of traffic.

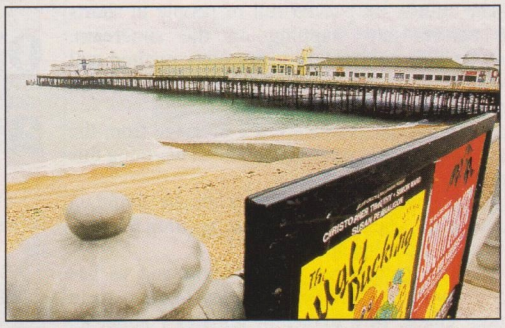
Although Hastings has many things to do it doesn't always have leisure facilities for teenagers. There used to be the ice-rink and the pier but now both of these have closed. These were good places to go, both during the day and at night. They could be opened up. These could be running businesses again if effort was put into it.

Many adults consider young people to be a source of trouble but this is usually not the case. They just want things to do at the weekends and in Hastings at the moment these leisure activities aren't available.

The town has a lot of potential and if only interest and enthusiasm was put into making the town better it could be a nicer place to live in.

Our world is a lovely place but it is slowly being ruined by many different things which should be put right.

The ozone layer is being destroyed by aerosols, factories and traffic pollution. It would mean severe consequences if the ozone layer does eventually break down. The polar ice-caps would melt causing destruction. This will not happen for many years but if pollution is not stopped it won't be long.



▲ Something should be done about the pier.

The world is full of crime and this needs to be stopped. Guns are a prime example of an increase in crime. They are a cause of so many deaths all over the world, especially in America and South Africa at the moment. There should be an international ban on them. This would make the world safer. Children as young as seven are allowed to use guns and this puts too many lives at risk so they should be prohibited.

Third world countries need help. Even though billions of pounds goes to them every year it doesn't always get to the people who really need it. This is because of corrupt governments. The people of the third world countries don't need handouts they just want the chance to work themselves out of poverty.

There should be more religious and racial tolerance in the world. If everyone learnt to accept each other's beliefs then the world would be so much more peaceful. Whether someone's white, black, Hindu or Muslim, everyone is different and no-one can change that.

Once I have left school (hopefully with good grades) I would like to go to sixth form college and then to university. I'd like to go to Spain or Jamaica for a year and become fluent in Spanish or Jamaican and work there. At the moment I am set on becoming a lawyer. Eventually I'd like to move to a Spanish region and live there. This is because of the warm climate which Hastings and Britain can't provide.

I want to be successful and healthy in whatever I choose to do. I have goals and dreams that I want to reach and hopefully with my own willpower and encouragement from others I can achieve them in this exciting new Millennium.

Hannah Bridger
Westerleigh School

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2000 and beyond

There's no place like Dome!

DON'T miss the opportunity of a lifetime to visit the Millennium Dome which opened on January 1.

The Dome, largest of its kind in the world, is open every day for one year only from 10am-6pm. There are extra evening sessions planned from April.

It is an amazing sight that cannot be captured without a visit. The Dome is so magnificent and large that it could contain two Wembley Stadiums or the Eiffel Tower lying on its side.

You can take a journey of discovery inside the Dome's 14 different zones, starting with the **Body Zone** designed in celebration of the human form. Prepare to be stunned as you view what is thought to be the largest representation of the human body made with bones of steel and shimmering skin of tile concrete.

● The **Faith Zone** demonstrates that the issues facing humanity do not change over periods of time. In a world of science and technology it encourages the growth of faith. This zone allows visitors to explore the beginnings of Christianity and to show the impact it has had on the UK.

▲ The **Living Island Zone** explores how the natural world has been changed by humans and the affect on the environment that modern lifestyles has had. Behind the theme of a seaside town at the bottom of a giant sewage pipe there is an underlying serious message about the damage the world can have on future generations.

● The **Money Zone** shows how money is handled around the world and the mysteries of modern finance is revealed. Visitors can have a pretend shopping spree and spend a million pounds to see how this extravagant fashion affects the economy.

▲ **Play Zone** conveys the message that playing is important for everyone. This futuristic zone contains between 30 and 40 games that have never been publicly seen before and gives you the opportunity to enjoy them.

● Celebrating the human brain, the **Mind Zone** may unravel the mysteries of the mind. The four sections of the zone explore the brain and intelligence and visitors can see the working brain of a person.

▲ Reflect on your self-image and identity in the **Self-Portrait Zone** which provides you with the opportunity to view the largest collage ever made.

● The **Shared Ground Zone** looks at how the world can become a better place to live in if we share responsibilities for communal space. Featuring in this zone are models of typical British rooms to show how people interact in modern Britain.

▲ The futuristic building of the **Skyscape Zone** is situated next to the Dome and will be the venue of many live concerts of big stars over the next year.

● The **Talk Zone** demonstrates the power and development of communications such as video phone.

▲ The theatre in **Our Town Zone** will stage live performances from communities across the nation to show the history and future hopes of their town.

● The **Work and Learn Zone** will show the contrast between the old way of working to the new opportunities of the Millennium.

▲ Visit the **Journey Zone** to discover a better way of travel for our environment.

● Experience the spirit of global travel and discovery in the **Home Planet Zone**.

Kerry Martin

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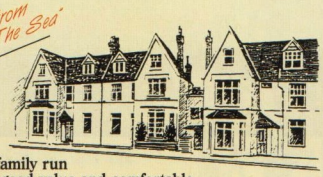

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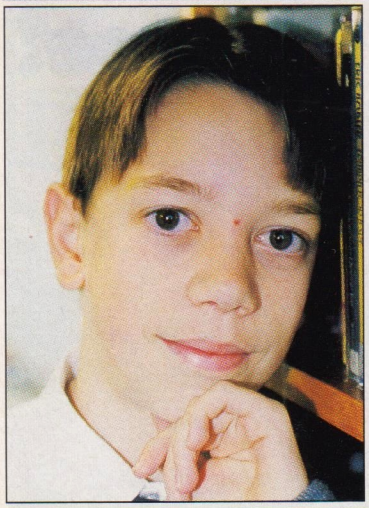
2000 and beyond



School of the future: No teachers,

IN the future I think school will be really cool. There will be no teachers just robots that the children can control.

There will be no stairs because we would wear special moon boots so that we could float up to the floors. There might be escalators or little lifts that will go at the speed of light.

To get to school I and most other people would have what is the world's fastest car right now.

In the classrooms there would be a special board that could talk to you and have arms so that it could write on itself.

We would not use pens with ink in them. We would use laser pens that shoot lasers onto a special type of paper. You wouldn't even have to hold the pen, you would say what you want to write. The paper would be really strong and have metal inside. It would even have legs so that you wouldn't have to carry it around with you.

The books would have arms and legs and would be able to talk to you so that if you were lonely you would at least be able to talk to your books.

In class we would not have the boring desk and chair. All pupils would have a special chair which has a TV, a playstation, a computer (with the internet), a phone, a drink holder. a food tray, a massager, built in desktop and a CD multi-player.

For school dinners we would have a metal tablet. You would tell it what you want and then it would explode into what you ordered. So there would no longer be a need for

Continued on facing page

An off-shore island and heliport...

THE visitor to the seaside leisure and sports haven that is the Bexhill of the mid-21st century might arrive at a transport hub with a vista down a pedestrian precinct to an off-shore island.

The man-made island might offer boat moorings, shops and hotel accommodation.

Alternatively, the visitor might have arrived by the island's heliport for a weekend's sailing, a visit to the town's casino, training at an all-weather inland water sports school or to log into on-line further education from Bexhill Polytechnic.

The Millennium is not just a time for looking back at the past but for gazing in the future's crystal ball.

The Observer has been sounding out town leaders, inviting them to dream dreams, fly kites, free their imagination from "can't do it" constraints and imagine the "can do" community of the future.

Twentieth century Bexhill owes much to the enterprise and entrepreneural skills of the founding De La Warr dynasty.

But in an age before "Nimbyism," it was the enthusiasm and support of a community which shared their lordships' infectious zeal and their desire not to see Bexhill outstripped in the race to create newly-fashionable seaside resorts which helped maintain the momentum of progress.

Fellow pipe-dreamers with whom the Observer has been discussing Millennium hopes agree that a key factor in changing the declining fortunes which marked Bexhill in the second half of the 20th century would be the emergence of a charismatic leader of similar stature to galvanise and unite town opinion.

But equally, they are agreed that the era of the landed gentry cutting a swathe through bureaucracy is long gone.

A far more realistic prospect is an ever-extending network of partnerships, drawing in both grant aid and private enterprise capital to create the 21st-century equivalent of that late-Victorian-Edwardian energy and up-date Bexhill to match the social, recreational and economic needs of the new Millennium.

No Messiah needed then, but certainly a broad church of bright ideas free of the constraints of the past and full of confidence in the future is required.

What might the Bexhill of 2050 have achieved?

Clear and inter-linked goals that have emerged in the past decade and which have now reached pressing status include the need to increase local job opportunities and raise earnings, so generating more spending power in local shops so that the range and standard of shopping facilities improves - in turn bringing more visitors and spending power to Bexhill.

Increased leisure time means that the Bexhill of the future must offer a broad range of recreational facilities.

So how might the 2050 scenario read?

Spurred on by the turn-of-Millennium success of pioneer projects such as South East England Development Agency's Coastal Strip trial, further grant-aided investment should by 2050 have made Bexhill once more a pace-setter in planned community development.

The concept of an off-shore island, not as far-fetched as it seemed at the Millennium, has been made reality thanks to developers seeing the opportunity for a realistic return on capital.

By now, Bexhill has the moorings which are attracting boat-owners - and their spending power. And what better means of relieving them of their strong

Continued on facing page

Royal Victoria Hotel
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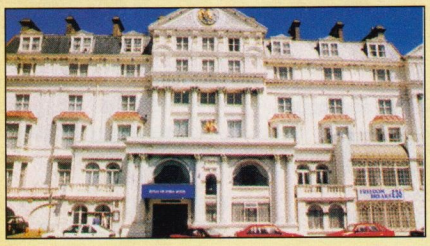

THE Royal Victoria Hotel was opened in 1828 and continues to offer the elegance of the Victorian era

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2000 and beyond

and Man U kit for uniform

From facing page

dinner ladies.

Each child would have a personal robot bodyguard. The robot would beat-up anyone that laid a finger on the child.

Some children, if they were rich, might choose to have home schooling with a teacher that is a robot computer that can talk to you. This would mean that you wouldn't even have to go to school!

The school would not be positioned on the ground. It would float in the air, so you would have to use moon boots to get into school.

The school uniform would be the Manchester United European football kit of the 1998-1999 season.

There would be some new lessons, such as: football, how to watch TV, movies and the history of movies. I would do tremendously well in these lessons because football, TV and movies are my best friends!

Overall, school in the year 2099 will be excellent if it goes according to my plans.

Luke Walker, age 11
St Richards School

My Millennium Wish...

...is that I could help people walk who can't walk now

Hettie Bywater

Age 5

Westerleigh School

this is Bexhill in the 21st Century

From facing page

and enduring Sterling than good quality hotels and a casino?

The bracing English Channel, the reason for Bexhill's first development, has become the catalyst for its re-birth.

A sea-skills centre of excellence on the island includes training in sailing, surfing, skiing and scuba-diving.

But an alternative inland water sports centre has been created as soon as the Turkey Road clay quarry is worked out. It offers all-weather training in a woodland environment and now provides a bridge between town amenities and the rural recreational opportunities represented in 1066 Country.

By now, the need for land-fill, incineration and conventional waste water technology has been replaced by biodegradable packaging, intensive re-cycling and advanced, home-based, miniaturised treatment and composting techniques.

This has enabled the "green wedge" between Bexhill and Hastings to become just that for the first time.

The success of the Pebsham Country Park in an age of leisure and environmental consciousness has led to the town being girdled from Glyne Gap, up and over the back of Sidley and down to the sea again at Normans Bay.

Leisure reserves

Within this "leisure corridor" are nature reserves with interpretive centres, history and natural history learning centres, a network of way-marked paths, horse rides and cycle tracks, stabling, additional golf courses and rural crafts centres.

Within the town centre - by now a recognised stopping point for students of Edwardian architectural history - pedestrianisation has become the norm.

Solar cell electrical vehicles have replaced fossil fuel-burning pollutant traffic and town centre transport is by airport-style moving pavements and swipe-card payment crewless electric buses.

The only internal combustion engines to be seen and heard are in the handsome Bexhill Motor Heritage Museum and at the monthly specialist festivals dedicated to aspects of automotive development pioneered at the Bexhill Motor Trials of 148 years before.

Global warming

Bexhill Polytechnic has a well-endowed department devoted to the history of motor transport. As a consequence of the monthly motor gatherings having become a globally-known attraction and of the construction of the off-shore accommodation, long-defunct Bexhill Hotels Association has been re-formed as an effective community pressure group.

Following a national trend and taking advantage of pedestrianisation and global warming, regular street farmers' markets and craft markets have done much to restore the rural economy by enabling the producer to sell direct to the consumer.

Bexhill's Grade II Listed Sea Road station has long-since been restored and converted into the town's much-admired Heritage Centre.

Further along the mono-rail hover-line, the new communications hub fronting historic Devonshire Square features both high-speed trains and crewless buses.

Business leaders will choose between the 30-minute rail journey to Victoria or the similarly-timed flight to London Heli-pad.

...And the centrepiece of the Egerton Grove Sport and Leisure Gardens is the Heroes' Arcade with busts of the townsfolk who, from many different disciplines and organisations, emerged as the leaders who back at the Millennium began the transformation of Bexhill's fortunes.

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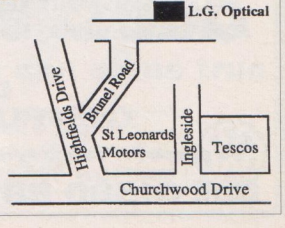

2000 and beyond

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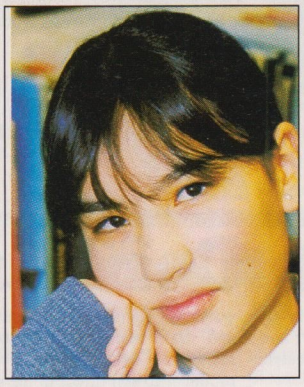

May Oxfam merge with Habitat
May the Queen do a Millennium rap
Let England win the cricket for once
Make a dome that isn't crap

Give me fame and fortune
A BSE scare in France
Good grades in my GCSEs
Free university grants

I don't want GM Brussels sprouts
Or earthworms in my bed
Just perk up my life a little bit
Before I'm too damn dead

Hazel Northcott, age 15
St Richard's

MILLENNIUM MEANING

IN a world of materialism
What does Millennium mean
Is it 2000 years of history
The past, what has been

Is it to honour and respect
All who have gone before
Who have made our world safe
By enduring life threatening wars

Is it to amazingly recall
All the discoveries and inventions
Developing health care and wisdom
Surpassing man's intentions

Is it to remember and celebrate
The 2000th anniversary of God's son
Who came into a world of sin
And died to make God and man one

Is it just an excuse for a party
Without any meaning at all
To provide us with a justified reason
To celebrate in a drunken brawl

Is it to reflect and to ponder
What does the next century hold
More advanced and complicated technology
The ability to achieve your own goal

Will there be peace and understanding
An acceptance of people as they are
An end to racial intolerance
A chance for a brand new start

Whatever Millennium means to you
And however you choose to celebrate
Wherever you are when Big Ben chimes
Time continues, it will not wait.

Kerry Martin, age 17
Grove School

MY DREAM OF THE FUTURE.

MY dream of the future is that there are no more wars and everywhere is peaceful and friendly.

I would like every job to be done by robots; cooking, cleaning, washing and sewing. I would also like sweets to have the same taste but to be fat and sugar free so that we could eat as many as we want without getting fat or having yellow teeth.

All this would be ruined if a comet hit the earth so a dream that I would like to come true is that there would be a forcefield around the earth still allowing sunlight and moonlight to shine through but preventing comets from hitting.

At school you would have automatic pens that would write for you. All you would have to do is tell them what to write. In lessons you would sit at a desk and when it's time for the next lesson you wouldn't have to get up it would go there for you.

Travelling would be changed. Instead of sitting in a hot, stuffy car doing nothing, you would have a huge car the same shape but ten times bigger.

Inside the car would have beds, games, a CD player, a radio, a fridge freezer and a TV.

The environment would be different as people would stop cutting down trees and polluting the atmosphere. To get to another country planes would have lots of chambers which you would lie in and as soon as someone pushed a button you would instantly fall asleep.

Elizabeth Bateman
Thomas Peacocke

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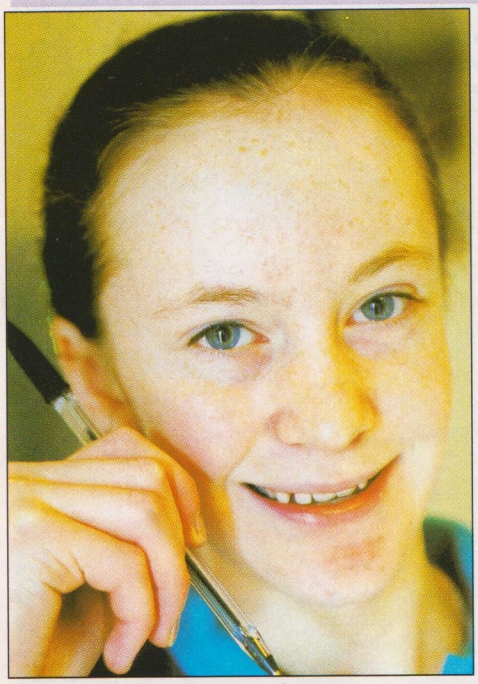
2000 and beyond



Each day should not be a struggle just to stay alive

A THOUSAND years have passed since the beginning of the last Millennium. considering how people lived before it, it is amazing to think what has changed, and impossible to imagine what life would be like without those changes, most of which we now take for granted.

During the last Millennium we have achieved a lot, but in future there is still the need to find out how to make the world a better, and safer place to live in.

We could start by finding out more about life-threatening illnesses and diseases such as AIDS, and cancer in order to find a 100 per cent reliable cure.

Even if a cure isn't found, people need to lean 'how' and 'why' these illnesses occur, to try and prevent them. However, to do that, you need money, and some countries don't have money - to even attempt curing quite simple, but, to them, fatal problems.

One such place is Africa. Although a minority live in luxury in one of the most beautiful countries in the world, the majority of people live in poverty, each day being a struggle for survival.

This problem has occurred because of one incredibly important reason, which has become out of hand.

This problem is 'World Debt', where Third World countries in debt cannot afford to pay back more developed countries, from whom they have borrowed money.

However, the countries they owe money to could survive perfectly well without the interest on the money, and by cancelling it, it would enable the people in poverty-stricken countries to lead normal lives like the rest of the world.

We also need to provide enough food and water for the whole world, as some countries including Britain and America have more than enough food, while others are living in a constant famine.

Good things however have happened during this millennium: women and men are now seen as equals; children get the decent education they deserve, and have rights and in many countries racism is now under control.

Despite these improvements, many bad things have happened as well.

Wars have become much more random. Ordinary citizens who have nothing to do with the problems are being killed in huge numbers in war torn zones, instead of two sides of military fighting as it used to be.

These problems can only be overcome with a lot of planning, co-operation and work, but if they were sorted out it would improve the world we live in.

Locally, I think a lot needs to be done to improve transport in and around East Sussex to avoid bad traffic congestion in the future millennium.

It is getting worse, because East Sussex is one of the most beautiful and prosperous places in the UK. Therefore more and more people are coming to live here, resulting in an over-crowded area, and constant traffic jams and road-works!

On a much smaller scale, I'd like to get a job that has something to do with either media or law.

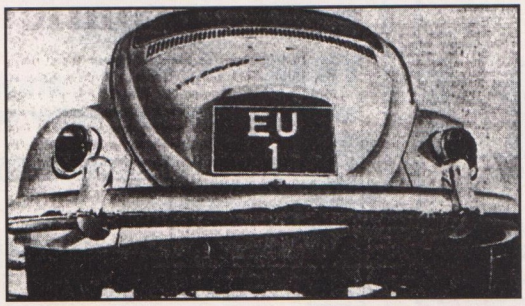
Media particularly appeals to me in the form of becoming involved in journalism, particularly reporting on T.V. I think that would be an amazing and incredible experience to visit the places which were making the news, as you could be right among those people.

As well as this, communications are going to be one of the biggest issues in the 21st century, as even small children are involved with I.T. and the Internet.

Law would also be good to work within, because it will stop people becoming exploited by large international companies, and it would also help the environment.

It would be impossible to list all my hopes and aspirations for the future, so I have only written about a few of them, but that doesn't mean they are my only ones. I just hope that by the time of the next millennium, we will be celebrating what we have achieved, and looking forward to another amazing thousand years.

GEORGIA CATT (13)
Helenswood School



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2000 and beyond

Millennium attraction to lift town

WITH the new century now upon us, we must not forget the progress which has been made during this time. I am sure that everyone can say that they are looking for – and hoping to see – changes in the next few years.

Progress is often hoped for but rarely expressed verbally. In this essay I hope to express some of my hopes for the future.

I live in a very touristic town known as Hastings. No one could say that their town or village is perfect and personally I know that the changes which I hope to bring forward could be altered and that everyone knows nothing is impossible.

Hastings has many good points, it is celebrated with many people all over the world for the Battle of Hastings and with its tiny footpaths seem to contribute to that effect.

There is plenty for children of a younger age as there is a Clambers nearby. There are many amusements along the seafront, which give children a chance to play safely and have fun.

Yet, ask yourselves this question: is it safe for older children to be out by themselves?

No. There are far too many alcoholics on the streets today, and as I am 14 I think there should be something done about it. As you become a teenager you want to learn some responsibilities,but you cannot because your parents do not trust people about on the streets.

Hastings isn't just the only town which has these people with anti-social behavioural problems, many do. It may be one step further if we, as a district, did something about it. Then Hastings will be the first to solve this problem and tourism may grow.

This problem affects all of the community. Many people do not feel safe walking past the drunks in the town centre, especially older members of our society who are unable to fight back at the abuse they sometimes suffer.

In many towns they have a main attraction, which Hastings I feel does not. Many changes have been made which we should not forget as three years ago Priory Meadow shopping centre was built.

So wouldn't it be nice if we built an attraction which would mark the new Millennium? Perhaps we could re-build the pier and create it as entertainment for all the family. Or re-vamp the seafront to make it a fun and friendly atmosphere for all.

Hastings is not a bad town but it is not perfect either. With these changes it could be so much better.

Problems can occur all over the world and there are great deals of things I know that people disagree about.

I certainly think that countries around the world do not respect one another and that if I were to wish for something it would probably be world peace. Just imagine what the world would be like if everyone worked in harmony.

Many countries have feuds because of their own beliefs. Perhaps they disagree with one another's religions. We're all different and no one can wish for everyone to be the same. Religious tolerance around the world will stop these dreadful outcomings. We should accept everyone for who they are and not try to force them to become something that they do not want to be.

Deadly consequences

Pollution is probably the hardest to stop for the future. If we continue to pollute the world the consequences will be deadly. It has already been scientifically proven that the pollution we create is damaging our ozone layer.

We may all die before anything affects our world but think of the children of the future. Stop polluting for them and you never know, it may help us to live longer as well.

As I sit here writing this essay, putting my thoughts forward, I know that I will go home to shelter tonight and that there will be food ready for me to eat.

Some people though are less fortunate then any of us, and I think we should never forget the people in the Third World countries who may be too busy working, providing their family with food to celebrate the turn of a new era.

I hope that for the future, everyone becomes equal. Many people may disagree with this statement but put yourself in their position. We don't have to buy them food, they do not want charity. All they ask for is opportunities, which we have.

I am sure that not all of you agree with my hopes and dreams for the future but if I had the power to, I would change these things.

Many people now would hope for wealth for themselves in the future. I just wish that I will become successful and hope that my family are proud of what I become eventually.

However my chief hopes are that my family and friends will live a happy and healthy life, and I hope that they will be there to see the turn of the Millennium and subsequently to watch my hopes become reality.

Charlotte Collyer, age 14
Westerleigh School

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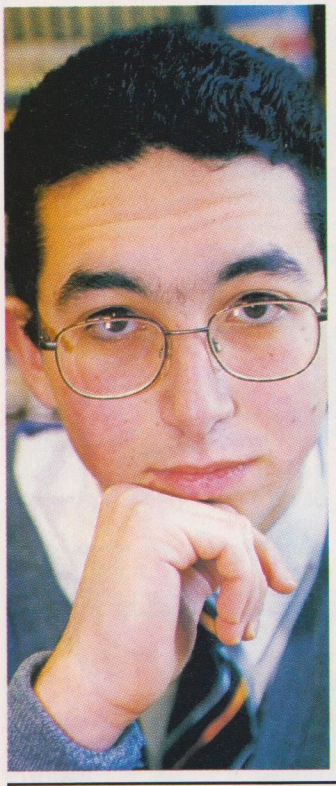

It's over, the two wars fought and won
Time to sit back and have some fun
But stirring, miles from here
A man who will strike fear
Fear into the lives of the men in the west
The ones who think they are the very best
They fill their pockets up to the brim
Forget the people they have left slim
Drive their fast cars
To their big homes
With their personalised bars
In rooms with glass domes
The man tells the people of their lives
Of their nice homes and beautiful wives
The man tells the people of their own dull lives
Of their crumbling houses and suffering wives
The people's anger is growing, they become strong
The man in the crowd says it's not very long
When the man in the west
Will take the ultimate test
The man in the crowd asks the others
"Who will have the next 2000 years of power?"

Amir Pitchforth, age 14
St Richard's

My school of the future

THERE would be your own robot which had two buttons, FOOD and DRINK, and when you were hungry or thirsty you could press either button and a menu would come. You could then type what you wanted and the computer would give it to you.

Harriet Green, age 11

After A Hundred Years

After a hundred years on this earth
I hope that Ill see that the youth aren't all bad
And not sit around the house all day
Thinking of the past and going slowly mad.

I hope that I won't blame the young
For the fact that I had to grow old
Even though life will have passed me by
It's not their fault I"m left feeling so cold.

Staring from my window out at life
The kind I enjoyed when time was on my side
When I look back on how I spent my days
I hope to reminisce with pride.

Maybe I'll be a famous writer
A war veteran of battles to come
Possibly homeless on a park bench
Swigging my last bottle of rum.

I hope they'll be someone to be with me
When the time has come to retire
From my job which I hope will be worthwhile
And something from which I will never tire.

If Father Time mugs me unexpected
As can commonly occur
I want to deal with old age
I'll deal with it my way, I'm sure.

Is what's awaiting me in life
Within my twilight years
No more than a stopgap
Until my time draws near?

No one can say for certain
But this much I know is true
The only way to see what's coming
Is to live my life the way I want to.

by Ian Smith, age 15,
St Richards

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2000 and beyond

UNDER PRESSURE!

by MELISSA FREEMAN, 15, St Richards School

AS a teenager growing up in the late 1990s, I am very aware of media pressure on us teenagers of today to have the 'perfect figure' and the 'beautiful, flawless face'. The harsh reality is that these do not exist.

However, everywhere we look we find images of the super-human people who appear to have nothing wrong with the way they look. These images subconsciously persuade us to think that this is what we must look like to be attractive to the opposite sex.

This type of media pressure is undoubtedly dangerous, just look at the number of teenagers, particularly girls, who are diagnosed with an eating disorder each year.

The images which are forced into our lives day after day are of models who are tall, slim and appear to be amazingly beautiful.

I feel this underlines the commercial society we live in as the truth is that these people are computer generated.

If they have spots, sometimes even freckles, these are taken out by the computer so they appear to be more perfect than they actually are.

Models today weigh 23 per cent less than the average girl. If you look in shop windows you see mannequins which, if they were real girls, would be too thin to menstruate.

The pressure, however, is not just on girls, although it does seem to affect them more. The media have started on boys now as well. The mannequins in their shop windows have a six pack that any girl would drool over, the models never have spots, bad hair days or anything else which is part of a typical teenager's life. Oh no!

They appear to be perfect. We can see that the pressure on the guys is getting just as great as it is on the girls as there are more males now being reported to have eating disorders or committed suicide as they were unhappy with the way they look.

Today's media seem to forget that girls want guys with a great personality rather than a great body.

Having looked back on how the media pressurise today's teenagers into thinking they should diet or stop eating altogether to look appealing to the opposite sex, my main hope for the future is for the media to use the 'average girls and guys' rather than the ones which have dieted all their lives to get onto our TV screens or magazine pages.

I hope that the media will realise the unfair pressure they are putting teenagers under because with exams and friends and family to keep an eye on, we don't need our figure to be another worry in our lives.

I also hope that the media will not play such an important role in our lives as teenagers today are very easily influenced by what they see on television or read in books.

This has led to many murders, particularly in America, of school children like myself.

One boy is thought to have imitated a scene from 'What's Eating Gilbert Grape?' in which Leonardo DiCaprio dreams about shooting his classmates dead.

The media is having an ever increasing impact on a teenager's life when it should in fact be there for entertainment, not to provide us with unrealistic images or dangerous actions.

The perfect figure?

Former Helenswood pupil Emma B has been a big hit as a model. But are teenagers under pressure to copy her?

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